K. P. Sinha

NAIRĀTMYA-VĀDA

—THE BUDDHIST THEORY OF NOT-SELF

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ABOUT THE WORK

In this book, the author has endeavoured to show that in regard to the conception of the self, all the schools of Buddhism exhibit a continuity of thought. In his opinion, the central point of the doctrine of the self propounded by the Buddha and his followers is that the individual self as an eternal entity has no existence, that the individual self is an ever-changing entity which ultimately becomes extinct, and that the real self of all beings is Nirvāṇa, which, at the same time, is the Universal Self.

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—THE BUDDHIST THEORY OF NOT-SELF

DR. K. P. SINHA
Sanskrit Dept.
University of Gauhati

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PREFACE

It is generally held that the later Buddhists deviated from the stand-point of Buddha and developed their doctrines in different direetions. Accordingly, it is said that Buddhism is not 'one' system but a combination of 'different' systems. In the opinion of the present writer, this contention is true only in the case of a few concepts of some systems, but in most cases such a generalisation cannot stand. Thus, the view of the Pudgala-vādins that there is an eternal individual self, thatof the earlier Sautrāntikas that *Nirvāṇa* means the annihilation of the self and that of the Vaibhāṣikas that there are permanent substances behind the changing phenomena are deviations from Buddha's preachings. Excepting such a few cases, all the later systems of Buddhism are nothing but explicitations of the ideas implicit in Buddha's preachings. In all the systems of Buddhism (the present) writer holds, there is a continuity of thought. In the present exposition, he has tried to show that this viewis true in respect of the conception of the self. In his view, all the doctrines of the self propounded by Buddha and the later Buddhists have their significance in the point that the individual eternal self is non-existent, and that the real self of all beings is *Nirvāṇa*, which, at the same time, is the Universal Self or the Absolute.

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—The Author

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ABBREVIATIONS

AK.	:	Abhidharma-Kośa
AN.	:	Aṅguttara Nikāya
BC.	:	Buddha-Carita
CPB.	:	The Central Philosophy of Buddhism
DB.	:	The Doctrine of the Buddha
IP.	:	Indian Philosophy
MK.	:	Mādhyamika-Kārikā
MN.	:	Majjhima Nikāya
SBT.	:	Systems of Buddhistic Thought
SDS.	:	Sarva-Darśana-Saṁgraha
SN.	:	Saṁyukta Nikāya
TS.	:	Tattva Saṁgraha

NAIRĀTMYA-VĀDA

1. MEANING OF THE TERM '*ĀTMAN*' AND THE BUDDHISTIC PROBLEM.

The term '*ātman*' used in the Upaniṣads bears two meanings : *jīva* or the individual self and *Brahman* or the Universal Self. These two selves are, however, not different from each other, since, in the final analysis the individual self is said to be identical with the Universal Self. Upanisadic passages like '*tat tvam asi*'—that thou art, '*ayam ātmā brahma*'—this individual self is Brahman etc.[1] explicity speak of the identity between the individual self and the Universal Self. In explaining the Upaniṣadic position, some Advaita Vedāntin hold that the Universal Self limited by *antaḥkaraṇa* (the internal organ or mind) or *ajñāna* (the individual ignorance) is revealed as the individual self.[2] According to some other Advaita Vedāntins, the individual self is merely a reflection of Brahman in *antaḥkaraṇa* or in *avidyā* (the individual ignorance in which impure sattva is predominant)[3]. Both these groups of the Advaitins, however, agree that, when *ajñāna* or ignorance is destroyed by true knowledge, the self attains liberation and realises its identity with the Universal Self. This realisation is not the attainment of some new object or reality ; it is nothing but the re-affirmation of the real nature of the self which is nothing but the Universal Self.

Now, Gautama Buddha and his followers are known as the propagators of the theory of *Anātmavāda* or *Nairātmyavāda*, i.e., the non-existence of the self. This *Anātmavāda* denies two sorts of *ātman* or self. First, it denies the subjective *ātman* or the individual self which is looked upon by some as a spiritual substance—eternal, changeless·

independent and separate from everything else—and as residing distinctly in every organisam. Secondly, it denies the objective *ātman* or the Universal Self said to be lying behind the phenomenal world and controlling it in all its states.[4]

As regards the view of Buddha himself, most of the later Buddhists hold that he denies the existence of the individual eternal self. Among the Buddhists, however, there are some known as the Pudgala-vādins consisting of the Vātsīputrīyas and the Sammitīyas who do not accept the position that Buddha denies the existence of an eternal individual self.[5] In modern times also, most of the scholars say that Buddha denies the individual eternal self. On the other hand, there are certain thinkers like George Grimm, S. Radhakrishnan and others who strongly assert that Buddha does not reject the idea of the self. George Grimm holds that the problem whether the self exists or not does never arise in Buddha's mind. In his view, the existence of the self is presumed by Buddha ; the only problem with him is : what the self is not.[6]

It is noteworthy that Buddha has never categorically or uniformly said that the self does not exist ; nor has he said that it exists. Of course, Nāgārjuna informs us that Buddha has sometimes proclaimed the self as existing, while at other times, as non-existing.[7] Though in the sacred canons such categorical statements are not found, some statements of Buddha may be explained as supporting the information given by Nāgārjuna. First, Buddha has seriously objected to the remarks of the Brahmins and the Śramaṇas that he is a nihilist propounding the theory of the annihilation of the self.[8] From this, some opine that Buddha has accepted the self. If he were quite opposed to the idea of the self, it is argued, he would not have categorically said that he was not propounding the theory of the annihilation of the

self. Secondly, on certain occasions, Buddha has said that the self or 'I' is the root of all pains. It is this belief in the 'I' or self, he asserts, that makes one selfish and prone to enjoyment, causes hatred and enmity between man and man, and so on. Accordingly, he says that for the destruction of pain, one should root out this belief in the self.[9] From this, some argue that Buddha regards the self as a misconception and pleads for its destruction.

As regards the question of the Universal self—conceived either as *Iśvara*, i.e., the world-governor personal God or as the Absolute lying beyond the world-process—Buddhist scholars like Nāgasena, Buddhaghoṣa and others hold that Buddha does not accept such a reality. Among modern thinkers also, there are many who opine that Buddha does not accept any Universal Self—either as *Iśvara* or as the Absolute. In modification of this view, some thinkers say that Buddha wants only to show the path of liberation from worldly sufferings and is not concerned with metaphysical speculations. It is, therefore, said that the problem of existence or non-existence of *Iśvara* or the Abosolute lies beyond the sphere of Buddha's philosophy[10]. Some others, on the other hand, hold that *Dharma* or the eternal Cosmic Law propounded by Buddha replaces the concept of God, Still others opine that Buddha's *Nirvāṇa* is another name for the Absolute[11].

Regarding the view of the followers of Buddha, scholars opine in general that they deny the existence of the individual self, though from a positive interpretation of *Nirvāṇa*, some are inclined to say that according to the Buddhists, the self exists in liberation. There is, however, no controversy to the point that the Pudgala-vādins accept the existence of a permanent individual self. These Pudgala-vādins hold that there exists a personal entity called the self which is the eternal or

immortal essence in man. This self is said to be transmigrating from one birth to another and to be performing actions and experiencing the fruits thereof[12].*

As to the problem of the Universal Self, the Buddhists are of opinion that such a Self conceived as *Iśvara* has no existence. The concept of One Mind or Dharmakāya of the Avataṁsakas, however, closely resembles that of the *Iśvara* of the theists. The Universal Self conceived as the Absolute is also denied by the Buddhists in general, though the concept of *Nirvāṇa* has been regarded by some as replacing that of the Absolute. Of course, some Buddhists like Aśvaghoṣa and others positively accept *Tathatā* or *Bhūtatathatā* as the Absolute.

However, it is clear from the divergence of views, even amongst his followers themselves, that Buddha is not explicit in his exposition of the theory of the self. This problem, therefore, calls the attention of all who are interested in Buddhism. In the present exposition, we shall try to see whether Buddha and his followers accept or not any self—individual or Universal.

2. THE THEORY OF MOMENTARINESS

Before entering into the problem of the self, we should first know as to how Buddha looks upon the world. In explaining the nature of the world, Buddha

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*This view of the Pudgala-Vādins also results from the positive interpretation of *Nirvāṇa*. From the idea that *Nirvāṇa* is a positive reality, it is deduced that the self attaining liberation must be an individual eternal entity. But the present writer thinks that the nature of *Nirvāṇa* as expounded in Buddhism does not point to the existence of the individual or limited eternal self. He is, therefore, of the opinion that this view is a deviation from the mainstream of Buddhism.

propounds the theory of Impermanence or *Anityatva-vāda* which is the first *mudrā* or stamp of the fundamental principles of Buddhism In Buddha's view, this whole world is subject to incessant change ; it is a flux—a stream of becoming. There is no permanent entity or being running through these ever-changing entities. Just as the outer or material world is devoid of any permanent substance, so the inner world or life is devoid of any permanent self. Everything of the world, material or psychical, is impermanent and is constantly changing.[1] Buddha says, "Whoever perceives in truth and wisdom how things originate in the world, in his eyes there is no 'it is not', and whoever perceives in truth and wisdom how things pass away in this world, to him there is no 'it is".[2] This implies that in Buddha's view neither being nor non-being is the truth, but only becoming, which has no beginning or end. To him, reality is dynamic ; every entity is constantly in a process of change ; but there is no substratum to which these change may be ascribed, As soon as an entity is perceived in its name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*), it changes into something else. The world is thus in a process of continual coming to be and passing away. "There is nothing but movement···nothing else but a becoming."[3]

The theory of Momentariness or *Kṣaṇikatvavāda*, which claims to have brought out the real idea contained in the theory of Impermanence, holds that the incessant change spoken of is a change occuring in every moment.[4] In other words, all phenomena of the world, mental and non-mental, undergo changes every moment. As regards the motive-power behind this universal change, Buddha says that all things are endowed with four characteristics, namely, origination or *utpāda*, staying or *sthiti*, growth or *jarā* and destruction or *nirodha*.[5] It is

because of these characteristics, it is said, that a thing cannot continue to exist in the same condition for two consecutive points of time and undergoes changes in an endless series. It is to be noted that the Buddha himself has described the things of the world to be simply *anitya* or impermanent, and it is with reference to *vijñāna* or consciousness only that he has given the idea of momentariness. The analogy of flame has been used by him to show the momentary existence of *vijñāna*.[6] But whether this theory of momentary existence is to be applied to the non-mental realities also is not explicitly stated in his teachings.

Thus, though Buddhism does never accept any permanent entity in the world and regards all the *dharmas* or entities as constantly changing, the idea that things are strictly *kṣaṇika* or momentary, i.e., existing for one moment only, is not clearly seen in the early canons. This idea of momentary existence of all things is clearly visible in the Buddhistic works from the first century onwards. Aśvaghṣa in his *Śraddhtpādaśāstra* and Buddhaghoṣa in his *Viśuddhimagga* describe the five *skandhas—rūpa, vedanā, saṁjñā, saṁskāra and vijñāna*—as *kṣaṇikas*. Buddhaghoṣa in his *Viśuddhimagga* says, "Strictly speaking, the life-duration of a living being is exceedingly brief, being commensurate with the period during which a thought lasts. And just as a chariot-wheel in rolling rolls merely at one point of the tire and in resting rests only at one point, even so, life of a living being endures only for the brief period of one thought and as soon as that thought has ceased, the being of a past moment has lived, but does not live nor will it live, the being of a future moment will live but has not lived nor does it live, the being of the present moment does live but has not lived and will not live".[7] *Abhidharma Māhavibhāṣā Śāstra* also holds that the

five *skandhas* or aggregates of being are repeatedly produced and destroyed in every moment. From the seventh century onwards, this theory of Momentariness has begun to be much emphasised by the Buddhists, specially, by the Sautrāntikas. Particularly, after Śāntarakṣita of the eighth century and Ratnakīrti of the tenth century have supplied a strong logical ground to this doctrine, great emphasis has been laid on it by the later Buddhists. According to this developed doctrine, things are regarded as existing for one moment only and undergoing destruction at the next moment. A thing is destroyed immediately after acquiring its being (*ātmalābha*) ; *utpāda* or origination is followed by *nirodha* or destruction. This destruction of an entity is spontaneous and requires no additional cause.

The Vaibhāṣikas, of course, accept the existence of a thing in the three points of time—past, present and future, but yet they accept the momentariness of things in respect of the aspect of 'manifestation'. In their view, every element has two different aspects—the real essence of the element or *dharma-svabhāva* and its momentary manifestation or *dharma-lakṣaṇa*. Of these two, the first aspect exists in the past, present and future, while the second aspect exists for one moment only. Thus, the Vaibhāṣikas also accept momentariness in their own sense.[8]

We may here add that this development from the theory of Impermanence to that of Momentariness is a logical necessity, because once the impermanence or change of things is accepted, logic will demand that this change must occur in every moment or *kṣaṇa*—the smallest possible unit of time. Any great change in a human being or in any other thing is nothing but the aggregate of minute changes occurring therein every moment. Accordingly, every phenomenon, human or otherwise, is ever-changing and can never remain the same for even two consecutive moments.

If this momentary change be not accepted, we shall have to take recourse to the only other possible alternative that a thing changes at intervals of time. But in that case, we shall not find any uniform principle guiding these 'changes at intervals'. In other words, in the case of such an assumption, we shall not be able to explain why a phenomenon will remain the same for a span of time and then suddenly another phenomenon will jump into there to replace it. Moreover, if a phenomenon is to undergo a change after an interval, it will require an internal preparation in the meantime to undergo that change after the interval. That will amount to saying that the phenomenon in question has to undergo changes in the meantime. Hence, if a thing be impermanent and undergoes changes, that change must be effected in every moment. In other words, permanence and momentariness are the only two alternatives, and there is not any intermediate stage; if an entity is not permanent, it must be momentary.[9] If an iron-ball decays after some fifty years, we shall have to accept that this change has been effected every moment, since change at intervals will not be convincing. And, it is this logical demand that has led the later Buddhists to develop the theory of Impermanence into the theory of Momentariness, i.e., to accept all phenomena, mental and non-mental, as momentary. Not that a thing changes its modes or states, i.e., changes from one state to another, but that it lives for one moment only; at the next moment it disappears and is replaced by another thing. Thus, a so-called phenomenon—say, a pitcher—is not a single and stable entity but a chain of momentary phenomena.

To our ordinary perception, most of the material things seem to be stable and continuing to exist for a period of time in the same condition. Even when changes are noticed, we are of the idea that there is some constant

element which continues to exist through the different stages. When clay changes into a pitcher, we think that the element 'clay' continues to exist in the pitcher. To the Bnddhists, however, this idea of a permanent substance continuing to exist through different stages is a superstition. What we call a thing—say, clay or a pitcher—is, in reality, not a single phenomenon, but a chain of mementary phenomena coming one after another. But the successive phenomena replace the earlier ones so rapidly that the process escapes our view, and the thing in question seems to be a single phenomenon—continuous and stable—just as a glowing stick whirled round makes the false appearance of a complefe circle. In the same way, our life is a process of continuous becoming of the psycho-physical phenomena, and the belief in a constant and permanent self in the Individual is, to the Buddhists, a superstition. Prof. Rhys Davids says, "According to the Buddhist, there is no being, there is only becoming, the state of every individual being, unstable, temporary, sure to pass away·····Everything, be it a person, a thing or a god, is, therefore, merely a putting together of component elements·····Putting together implies becoming, becoming means becoming different and becoming different cannot arise without a dissolution, a passing away[10]."

This conception of continuous and momentary change is explained with the help of such symbolic illustrations as the stream of water and the flame. The stream of water of a river changes every moment, i.e., every moment newer volumes of water replace the earlier ones, but yet, to our view, the stream seems to be identiatical, and a single name is used to indicate such a streem of water. In a like manner, a flame is consumed every moment, and at every succeeding moment a newer flame is produced by the succeeding flow of fuel, yet the flame

seems to be identical to our view[11]. In the same way, any so-called phenomenon is a chain of momentary phenomena, yet it seems to be a single phenomenon. The same idea is applied to the case of the 'individual' also. What we call the 'individual' is nothing but a chain of mental and non-mental phenomena and not an identical entity.

In support ot this theory of Momentariness, Ratnakīrti puts forward some arguments. He tries to prove the momentariness of all things or the existents by the concomitance of 'existence' and 'momentariness', first, on the basis of *anvayavyāpti* or method of agreement in presence and, secondly, on the basis of *vyatirekavyāpti* or mothod of agreement in absence. The method of 'agreement in presence' says that whatever is existent is momentary, and the method of 'agreement in absence' says that a thing which is not momentary cannot be existent[12].

Here, the point to be noted is this: In Buddhism 'existence' is defined as *arthakriyākāritva* or practical efficiency, i.e., the capacity of producing some thing or effecting some change in the existing order of things. '*Arthakriyākāritva*' literally means the power of performing actions of some kind. Accordingly, what we call 'existence' means causal efficiency or the capacity to produe some effect[13]. An entity is, therefore, called 'existent' or *sat* if it can produce some effect. The seed is said to be existing, since it can produce shoots. The Buddhists try to show that the production of an effect can be accounted for only by holding that causal efficiency is the characteristic of 'existence.' Now, this casual efficiency being momentary, the Buddhists hold, things must be regarded as having momentary existence. They argue that, since the effect is impermanent, the power of production must be impermanent, and, hence, it cannot exist in a permarent

thing. It may be said that the potential power is permanent and becomes actual when other necessary conditions are fulfilled. But the Buddhists retort that whatever has the power to do something, does it, and whatever does not do it, has no such power ; if the conditions bring about the change, then they alone exist and not the permanent things. If things are regarded as permanent and changeless, they say, production of effects will remain unexplained. The Buddhists, therefore, hold that the doctorine of Momentarines is the only alternative[14].

In favour of the theory of Momentariness, Ratnakīrti argues thus : Whatever exists is momentary, because it exists, for example, a jug ; things in question exist ; therefore, they are momentary. Here, the idea is this that any change in the effect is to be regarded as caused by a corresponding change in the efficiency of the cause. And, as the 'existence' of a thing is nothing but its casual efficiency, the change in the effect finally points to the change in the 'existence' of the thing, or, to be explicit, in the casual entity itself. Now, a particular self-same effect produced at the present moment could not be produced in the past and cannot be produced again in future in perfect identity. That is to say, at every moment, some new or distinct effect comes into being. And, the momentary state of the effect indicates the momentariness of the casual entity itself. If things were permanent and constant, it could not be explained why they should produce different effects at different points of time. Thus, any difference in the effect necessarily points to a difference in the casual thing itself. In other words, at every moment, a thing is destroyed and a new thing comes into its place.

And, judging from the above point of view, we must argee that the jug which has been chosen as an example of 'existent' in the above-mentioned syllogism of Ratnakīrti

is momentary. Here, the jug is existent, since it produces certain effects in the form of the perception of some person. In this perception, the jug must be regarded as endowed with some power to force itself upon the perception of the person seeing it, i.e, to produce some impressions on his mind. If such a power of the object is not accepted, there is no reason why it should be perceived by some person. We cannot know the existence of a thing apart from the impressions created by it in our mind. And, these impressions created in our mind are, on their part, caused by the power exerted by the thing perceived. Thus, to speak in general, any thing is known to be existing when it exerts certain powers to produce certain effects. In other words, a unit of power or powers capable of producing some effect is conceived by us as a unit of existence.

Now, it must be accepted that the power of a thing to produce some effect is different at different points of time—past, present and future—since the effects which are produced by it at the present moment could not be produced in the past and cannot be produced again in future. Accordingly, the thing itself or the 'existent' also must be regarded as different at different times. It is absurd to hold that though a thing possesses the capacity to produce the said effect, it does not produce it in the past and the future, because if the capacity is there, it must not cease producing the effect. If a thing does not produce any effect in the past and the future, then there is no reason why it should produce it at the present moment. Whatever has the capacity to produce some effect cannot remain without doing so. Hence, if a thing produces some effect at one moment and does not at another, then it will have to be admitted that the thing is different at those two points of time. What produces some particular effect at present is not the thing which produced another effect at

an earlier point of time. The jug which produces an effect in the form of a perception is not the same jug that did not produce this perception at an earlier moment, because, in these two cases, the capacity to produce the effect is different. It cannot be held that though the capacity to produce some effect varies, the thing in itself does not vary, for a thing cannot be endowed with two contradictory or different capacities. Hence, if the capacity to produce an effect changes, the thing must be said to have undergone a change. Accordingly, the fact that a jug has some particular capacity at one moment and not at another, proves that the jug is not identical at these two moments (*śaktāśakta-svabhāvatayā pratikṣaṇaṁ bhedaḥ*). Thus, *arthakriyākāritva* or the capacity to produce some effect, which is nothing but 'existence' itself, has universal concomitance with *kṣaṇikatva* or momentariness. That means, whatever is existent is momentary.

Mādhavācārya also, while expounding the Buddhistic theory of Momentariness in the *Sarva-Darśana-Saṁgraha*, puts forward an argument quite similar to that of Ratnakīrti. He argues thus : Whatever exists is momentary, because it exists, for example, a mass of cloud.[15] Just as a mass of cloud assumes different forms at different moments, so all the existents become different at every succeeding moment. To follow the exposition of Mādhavācarya, existence is nothing but *arthakriyākāritva* or practical efficiency. This practical efficiency can have only two possible alternatives—successive and non-successive or simultaneous. And, as these two alter-natives are not consistent with a permanent entity, 'practical efficiency' cannot be concomitant with 'permanence'. Hence 'practical efficiency' must be regarded as concomitant with 'impermanence'.[16]

If, in defiance of this position, it is held that practical

efficiency is concomitant with a permanent entity, it can be asked, Mādhavācārya argues, whether this concomitance of 'permanence' is with 'successive practical efficiency' or with 'simultaneous practical efficiency'. If the first position is accepted, it may again be asked: does the permanent entity possess at the present moment the capacity of the past and the future activities or not? If it does, it must produce at present the effects of past and future also, because that which has the capacity to do something cannot cease doing so, i.e., if the sum-total of causes is present, the effect is sure to follow immediately. But, actually, a thing does not produce at present all the past and the future effects, A thing, therefore, must be regarded as having different capacities at different moments. In other words, practical efficiency is concomitant with momentariness. If the permanent entity does not at present possess the capacity of past and future, it will not possess the same at any time, because it is unchangeable in nature, and, accordingly the existence of that entity will never be known. If it is assumed that the permanent entity can produce different effects at different points of time because of its conjuction with successive subsidiaries, it may be asked if the subsidiaries assist the thing or not. If they do not assist, they are idle and no effect will be produced from them. If they do, it may again be asked if the subsidiaries are different from the thing or not. If they are different from the thing, then it must be regarded that it is the subsidiaries that produce the effect and not the unchanging thing. It it is held that the subsidiaries are identical with the original thing, then we shall have to say that, as the subsidiaries produce different effects at different moments, they are changeable and, as such, the original thing, which is regarded as identical with the

subsidiaries, also must be regarded as changeable in nature. That is to say, the thing is not permanent.

It is equally absurd to hold that the permanent thing has simultaneous efficiency. Here, it may be asked whether the permanent entity, after producing the effects at a time, survives or not. If it survives, then it will go on producing the effects unendingly. If it does not, its permanence is denied. Thus, a permanent entity cannot bring about an effect either successively or simultaneously. A paddy-grain can never produce a sprout unless it undergoes changes, i.e., if it is permanent. In other words, as 'existence' means practical efficiency, and as a permanent entity cannot have practical efficiency, the permanent is never existent ; things that exist must be regarded as undergoing constant changes, i.e., as momentary[17].

Here, the Naiyāyikas raise some objections thus : First, if the capacity to produce an effect be regarded as 'existence', it will be impossible to know anything, because capacity cannot be known until the effect is known, and that effect will not be known until its effect is known, and so on *ad infinitum*. Secondly, if no permanent object is accepted, knowledge of concomitance will not be possible, and, as a result, inference, which is admitted by the Buddhists also, will not be possible. Thirdly, if no permanent observer is admitted, momentariness will not be known. In reply to the first objection, the Buddhists appeal to facts. The existence of seed, they say, is nothing but the capacity to produce shoots. Even though this capacity depends on its effect for its being known, the fact that 'the capacity of producing shoots is known' cannot be denied. And, an infinite regress is not to be regarded as a fallacy if it is in harmony with facts. Actually, however, the seed-moment produces the conditions as well as the

shoots, just as a perceptual moment reveals a number of objects. This capacity of the seed-moment to do so is inherited from the causal moments which precede it. In reply to the second objection, the Buddhists say that the knowledge of concomitance is possible not because there are permanent entities, but because there is similarity between the relevant momentary entities. And, it must be accepted that in all cases of concomitance—say, between smoke and fire—it is similarity that is required, and not identity. As to the third objection, the Buddhists say that for the knowledge of momentariness no permanent observer is required. Facts show that when certain conditions are present, there arises the knowledge of concomitance. This knowledge of concomitance holds within itself the experience of the preceding moment: and it is this experience of the preceding moment that serves the purpose of an observer.[18]

It may be asked : why are all things subject to the law of constant change ? and, how do the worldly phenomena, material and psychical, run without a permanent substratum ? The Buddha replies that this law of universal change has an inseparable relation with the law of causation which guides the whole world. Every event is conditioned by its causes ; there is noting in the phenomenal world which is without some cause The nature and form of any phenomenon are ascertained by its previous causes or conditions. The very concept of a phenomenon carries with it the idea of origination, and the idea of origination necessarily implies destruction. Thus, Buddha says, "Know that whatever exists arises from causes and conditions and is in every respect impermanent".[19]

Now, the question is : If every phenomenon is a flux and is replaced by a completely new phenomenon at every succeeding moment, then why is there the idea of identity ? Why do we recognise something as that of an earlier point of time ? The Buddhists reply that a thing seems to be

identical or same in form and nature at different points of time, because the phenomena coming successively are similar to the earlier ones in their form and nature. And, it is because of this seeming sameness that we use a single term for a chain of phenomena. Actually, however, this seeming identity of form and nature and the use of an identical term by us do not guarantee the identity of the inner reality. It may be asked : Why should there be such a similarity at all ? If the pitcher of a certain moment is completely different from the pitcher of the next moment, just as it is completely different from a piece of cloth, why does a pitcher look like a pitcher at the next moment, and not like a piece of cloth ? To this, the Buddhists reply that, this is so because of the law of Causation according to which the form and nature of a certain phenomenon are ascertained by the preceding causes and conditions.

To come back to our point, what we call recognition or knowledge of the identity of something at two different points of time—past and present—is because of similarity, and not because of identity. Actually, however, recognition is a false conception. The old, lean and thin Devadatta is certainly not identical with the young, healthy and fat Devadatta, yet we say, 'this is that Devadatta'. The course of the Brahmaputra may change due to devastating flood-current, even then we say, 'this is that Brahmaputra. A building left fifty years back may undergo a radical change, still we say, 'this is that building'. Though our hair and nails grow and are cut off, we are of the idea that the same hair and nails are persisting The flame of a candle changes every moment, but it seems to us that the same flame is persisting all the while. In the same say, all abjects of the world—our bodies, ideas, emotions and all the external objects around us—are destroyed every moment and are replaced by similar things generated at the

succeeding moment, which are again replaced by other similar things at the next moment. and so on. It is these similar things coming in the succeeding moments in a series which make the impresssion that the things remain the same through all the passing moments. Moreover, when we say, 'this is that jar', it is clear that 'this jar' is being perceived by the senses at this present moment, but the identity between 'this jar' and 'that jar' is not perceived, because 'this jar' refers to the jar which is in front of my eyes, whereas 'that jar' refers to a jar seen in the past. Hence, the feeling of identity which is adduced to prove the permanence of things is not actual ; it is caused by a confusion between an object of memory referring to the past and an object of perception referring to the present. The idea of recognition is thus caused not by identity but by slmilarity or some sort of relatior.

And, Actually' if we analyse the wordly realitise. we shall see that there is nothing that does not undergo any change. Things like metal, stone etc. which seem to exist as identical, actually do not ; they also undergo changes at every moment. Not that things are liable to change by external conditions, but that they are intrinsically in a process of change. Modern science also has come to the conclusion that the untimate units of the physical world are intrinsically in constant movement, i.e., the world is always in continuous vibration. And, a scientist will certainly agree that a movement without a corresponding change is impossible. It may be asked : Even if the position that things undergo constant change is accepted, what is the guarantee that this change occours every moment ? The answer will be, as said earlier, that if incessant change is once accepted, we shall be forced to hold that the change is momentary, since there is no

intermediate stage between permanence and momentariness. This momentary change may be visible in some cases and not in others, but logic will compel us to accept it even in those cases where it is not perceived.

Now, the Satkārya-vādins or those who believe in the pre-existence of the effect in the cause, may argue like this: As a pitcher is produced from clay, and molases, from sugar-cane-juce, we shall have to hold that clay continues to exist through the pitcher[20], and sugar-cane-juice, through molases. Against this, we may argue, from the Buddhistic stand-point, thus: It is true that clay is there in the pitcher also, but it is not correct to say that the clay found in the pitcher is the same clay that was there before the production of the pitcher. As the forms of clay of these two points of time have different practical efficiencies, they should be regarded as different from each other. It may be argued by the Satkārya-vādins that, though there are some changes in the shape of clay in the pitcher, after all clay is there. But the point is this that 'clay' is a term given by us to some objects that are similar to each other, and, hence, the use of such a common term is not a proof of the identity of the objects denoted by it. It is contradictory, we may argue, to say that a thing (e.g., clay) has remained the same though it has undergone changes. If it is said that it is a change in the collocation of the parts and not of the thing itself, we shall have to say that change of collocation means change of relation which cannot be without a corresponding change in the relata or the parts themselves. Pushing this argument to its necessary extreme, we can say that the so-called minutest particles or atoms of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system are not eternal or unchangeable entities, rather they are subject to incessant change, since their mutual relations are constantly

changing. If it is argued that the change in the relata., i.e., in the parts or the atoms is a change of quality and not of the substance itself, then the Buddhists will counter that there is no distinction between substance and quality, since, in reality, the so-called substance and quality form one indentical entity. Here, it may be argued in support of the Buddhistic view that a thing is nothing but a combination of the smallest particles forming its parts. If that minutest particle is said to be the substratum of of quality, then it will cease to be the minutest, since such a position will make a division in the nature of the minutest particle. In other words, a substratum without parts cannot ee imagined. So, in the minutest unit of a thing, the concepts of substratum (*ādhāra*) and contained (*ādheya*) cannnot exist. That is to say, substance and quality are not different, rather they are identical. The Buddhists, therefore, hold that a change in the quality of some phenomenon means a change in the whole existence. Thus, any change in the mass means a change in the collocation of its elements which, again, means a corresponding change in the ultimate units. The clay found in the jar must, therefore, be regarded as different from the clay that was there before the production of the jar, though we apply the same term 'clay' in both cases because of some similarlty between them. In a like manner, sugar-cane-juice and molases are quite different from each other, but yet, seeing some similar quality, i.e., sweethess, we are led to the idea that sugar-cane-juice continues to exist in molases. Actually, however, the term 'sweetness' is applied by us to some similar elements ; it does not indicate the identity of the elements denoted by it. The sweetness of sugar-cane-juice is certainly not the sweetness of molases, yet we use the same term 'sweetness' for both because of

some similarity between them. In other words, we use a term to indicate a set of similar things, and not an identical thing. Thus, we can conclude that there is no phenomenon which does net undergo changes, i.e.. which continues to exists through different points of time.

It is, of course, to be noted that whenever Buddha declares 'everything' to be impermanent, he means to say that the five *skandhas* areimpermanent. Impermanence or momentariness is not to be attributed to *Nirvāṇa* which lies beyond the five *skandhas*. That is to say, the principle of impermanence is concerned exclusively with the phenomenal world and not with the world-transcending *Nirvāṇa*.

3. POSITION OF THE WORLD

It is clear from the above discussion that, according to Buddha, the objects of the world are always changing. In his teachings, again, there are some passages which admit of subjective interpretation of the world. That means, these passages may be interpreted to mean that the world has no independent reality of its own ; it is a creation of the knower like dream-objects. There are also passages which can be interpreted to mean that the particular objects of the world are individualisations of one universal reality, or that the world is an appearance of a transcendental reality. Later Buddhists divided into different sects try to explain all these passages in their own particular ways.

The Sarvāsti-vādins accept the real existence of a thing in the past, present and future. The Vaibhāṣikas follow this doctrine and hold that the worldly objects have got their objective reality and that they arenot the creations of the subject or knower. These objects exist independently of the mind and are directly perceived. The Vaibhāṣikas accept three eternal entities or *asaṁskṛta-dharma-s**, which are devoid

* *ākāśa, pratisaṁkhyā-nirodha* and *apratisaṁkhyā-nirodha.*

of orgination, decay and extinction. Besides these three, they admit a number of realities which are, according to them, both momentary and permanent at the same time. In forms or modes, these things are said to be subject to change, while in the substantial element, they are changeless. In other words, the phases or modes of a thing are momentary, while the substratum is permanent, since it exists throughout the three divisions of time — past, present and future[1].

The Sautrāntikas also accept the reality of the world, as distinct from the mind or the cogniser But, unlike the Vaibhāṣikas, they hold that an objeet is not direcctly perceived by us. In their view, what we perceive is merely a representation of the object, while the thing in itself lying behind the representation remains unperceived. But though not perceived, these objects are inferred, it is said, from their representations. The Sautrāntikas have developed the theory of Impermanence into the theory of Momentariness. They hold that all the objects of the world are momentary in their very nature ; here there is no permanent entity, as is held by the Vaibhāṣikas[2].

The Yogācāras accept only one category called *vijñāna* or consciousness and hold that the whole objective world is a manifestation ot this *vijñāna* ; it has no existence of its own. Some Yogācāras hold that the world is a creation of the individual consciousness or the knowing mind and that it may be compared to a dream-land or an illusory hair or a double moon. Thus, Dharmakīrti reduces the so-called external objects to sense-data or mere forms of our cognitions. Śāntarakṣita also puts forward a number of arguments to show that the external objects have no existence of their own This view is clearly a form of subjective idealism.

Some Yogācāras like Vasubandhu and others hold that the objective world is a creation not of the individual consciousness, but of the Universal Consciousness, which is called *Vijñāna* or *Vijñapti-mātra* or *Ālaya-vijñāna*. This cosmic consciousness transforms itself, on one hand, into different subjects and, on the other, into different objects. That means, the individval subjects or cognisers and the external objects are nothing but the transformations of one pure and Universal Consciousness which is the ground of all. This view can be regarded as a form of objective idealism.[3]

The Mādhyamikas hold that *śūnya* is the nature of reality; the whole world, both in its subjective and in its objective planes, is nothing but *śūnya* The term '*śūnya*' has been taken by the non-Buddhist philosophers of India in the sense of 'devoid of reality' or 'void'. According to this interpretation, the whole objective world and the subjects cognising it are unreal. However, when we study the Mādhyamika-doctrine more closely, we find that '*śūnya*' does not mean 'void'. The concept of *śūnya* negates not only affirmation about reality but also negation about it. It asserts that reality is neither existent nor non-existent and that it is inexpressible by human language and incomprehensible by human thought.[4] Thus, according to the *Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra*, the world cannot be regarded as 'real', because a real entity must not depend upon anything else for its origination and existence, while the things of the world depend upon other conditions. Nor can it be considered as 'unreal', since unreal things like a sky-flower can never come into existence. Again, the world is neither 'both real and unreal' nor 'neither real nor unreal'.[5] The *Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra* says that it is this indescribable or indeterminable nature of the things of the world that is denoted by the term '*śūnyatā*' or 'void-ness'. This doctrine cannot, therefore, be regarded as nihilism. Candrakīrti, in

his commentary on the *Mādhyamika-kārikā*, seriously criticises those who regard the Mādhyamikas as nihilists and asserts that this doctrine transcends both affirmation and negation. In reality, according to this doctrine, the world, as we perceive it, is real from the conventional point of view, while it is unreal from the transcendental point of view, because the whole universe is of the nature of *Nirvāṇa*.[6]

4. THE LAW OF CAUSATION

The theory of Impermanence or Momentariness necessarily leads us to the problem of causality, since, according to Buddhism, momentary change of things or succession of events is guided by the law of Causalioy. This law says that whatever exists arises from causes and whatever has a cause is sure to perish. What we call a thing is only a continuum of momentary states each of which is determined by its antecedent conditions. It is commonly held that the cause continues to exist in the effect : clay is said to be continuing to exist in the jar, and the seed, in the sprout. But the Buddhists hold that the cause is destroyed before the production of the effect and, hence, the former does not continue to exist in the latter. In their view, it is only after the destruction of the seed that the sprout arises.

The Sāṁkhyists hold that the cause and the effect are identical. But, to the Buddhists, this is meaningless, since the Sāṁkhyists also accept the emergence of some new elements or modes in the effect. Moreover, if the cause re-appears in the effect, it is argued, there will be a ceaseless production of the latter,[1] because the presence of the cause is necessarily followed by the emergence of the effect. The Sāṁkhyists hold that the essence of a thing remains the same, while changes occur only in its forms or modes. These forms or modes are also, in their view, not new elements ; they remain

dormant in the cause, and, in the effect, these dormant modes are simply manifested. But the Buddhists argue that the acceptance of such a manifestation of modes goes against the very thesis of the Sāṁkhyists. As the manifestation is said to be not there in the cause, they say, it must be accepted as the new element in the effect.[2] This means that the effect or the manifested form and the cause or the unmanifested form are different from each other. The difference of practical efficiency also shows difference between the cause and the effect, for while a jar can hold water, clay cannot. If the cause and the effect are regarded as absolutely identical, all ideas of causation or production must be given up. Nāgārjuna, therefore, says, "Identity between the cause and the effect is utterly untenable, since if it were so, there would be no difference between the doer and the thing done".[3]

The Naiyāyikas propound the theory of *Asat kārya-vāda*, according to which, the effect is completely a new creation and is quite distinct from the cause. The Buddhists also look upon the effect as completely different from the cause But there is a difference between the view of the Naiyāyikas and that of the Buddhists. The Naiyāyikas regard the effect as produced from the cause and as related to it through the relation of *samavāya* or inherence. This means that, though differnt, the cause exists inseparably along with the effect. The Buddhists, on the other hand, do not say that the effect is produced from the cause ; nor do they regard the effect as related to the cause. In their view, the cause is completely destroyed before the production of the effect and, hence, does not exist along with the latter.

The causal theory of the Buddhists is known as *Pratītya-samutpāda*. '*Samutpāda*' means *prādurbhāva*, i.e., 'appearance' or 'rising', and '*pratītya*' means 'after getting'. These two terms combined mean 'origination after getting something',

i.e, the emergence of something after the presence of something else. This theory tries to find out 'what happening what else happens, what not happening what else does not happen.' Of these two phenomena, the former is called the cause, and the latter, the effect. There being the cause, there is the effect, and there being the absence of the cause, there is the absence of the effect The common-sense view is this that in the process of causation something changes into another. But the Buddhists hold that a thing cannot change into another, because a thing is what it is and cannot become something else.[5] In their view, causation means the uniform succession of two events, of which the antecedent is the cause, and the consequent, the effect. That is the cause, the presence of which entails the emergence of another, and that is the effect which emerges in dependence on another.

The Buddhists hold that every event, internal or external, is determined by its previous event. There being some event, another event is sure to follow. The whole universe is conditioned by causes ; every event comes into being in dependence on its previous conditions. Thus, the origination of all the entities of the world, sentient and non-sentient, depends on something else. Causation, according to the Buddhists, is, therefore, simply dependent origination. Here, there is no substance or entity continuing to exist through different states.

The law of Causality has got two aspects—external and internal. In the external aspect, this law gives an explanation to the causation of material things by holding that when the antecedent conditions are present, the effect comes into being. When seed, air, soil, heat etc. are present, and no other element interferes, the sprout is sure to come. If any of these necessary conditions is missing, the sprout will not arise.

In the internal aspect, i. e., in the sphere of an individual, the law of Causation gives an explanation to the life-process. Our life-process consists of twelve links or *dvādaśa nidāna* of which each link precceding is responsible for the emergence of the next one. These links are : (1) *ovidyā* or ignorance, (2) *saṁskāra* or conformation, (3) *vijñāna* or consciousness which arises when a being enters the womb of the mother (4) *nāma-rūpa* or name and form, i.e., the mental (*nāma*) and physical (*rūpa*) conditions of the being in the mother's womb, (5) *ṣaḍāyatana* or the six sense-organs representing the state of a being when it comes out of the mother's womb, (6) *sparśa* or contact which represents the consciousness resulting from the contact of the senses with the objects, (7) *vedanā* or sensation or feeling—pleasant, painful or neutral, (8) *tṛṣṇā* or thirst or craving for the objects of of the senses, (9) *upādāna* or attachment or hyper-thirst for having more objects of enjoyment, (10) *bhāva* or existense representing actions which are the causes of the future becoming, (11) *jāti* or birth or rebirth, i.e., union with consciousness and matter in the mother's womb, which is the beginning of a new life, and (12) *jarā-maraṇa* or old-age and death. These twelve links are without any beginning and go on in a cyclic way through cause-and-effect relation.[6]

The general causal law of *Pratītya-samutpāda* was first applied only to the case of life, but later, with the development of the theory, it has come to be applied to all the elements of the world. That this theory is applicable to all the elements has, of course, been indicated by Buddha, who has declared that every event has a cause and that this cause is to be found not in some supra-natural agency, but in the antecedent event itself[7]. The process of incessant change found in the world of sentient and non-sentient entities is guided not by any super-human agent,

but by the law of causal sequence. Thus, the law of Causation rules supreme in the world of becoming. It is this law by which Buddha explains the continuity of life and matter even in the absence of some permanent substratum. This law tries to establish that the constituted world has no creator or governor behind it ; the world is self-created, being dynamic in nature, and, in each step of its progress, it is guided by its antecedent causes and conditions.

That the law of Causation is of utmost importance for a clear understanding of *Dharma* or the law of the world-process is indicated by Buddha who says, "He who sees *Pratītya-samutpāda* sees *Dharma* ; he who sees *Dharma* sees *Pratītya-samutpāda*"[8]. Here, the implication is this that the law of Causation gives an explanation to the theory of universal flux or the doctrine of unconnected flow of momentary entities on which the complete super-structure of Buddhism has been erected. This law explains how and why all the earthly entities, sentient and non-sentient, come into being and are destroyed. To be more explicit, since every event is conditioned by its causes, the very concept of a phenomenon carries with it the idea of origination, and the idea of origination necessarily implies destruction. Buddha says, "Know that whatever exists arises from causes and conditions and is in every respect impermanent"[6]. In the words of Prof. Stcherbatsky, "This law positively establishes that the constituted world is ever in a dynamic state and is thus infimately connected with law of universal change"[10]. Thus, the law of Causation is only another aspect of the theory of universal flux. Any entity is a chain of point-instants and every point-instant arises in dependence upon its antecedent point-instants which are the causes. To quote Prof. Stcherbatsky again, "Every point-instant of

reality arises in dependence upon a combination of point-instants of which it necessarily succeeds; it arises in functional dependence upon a totality of causes and conditions which are its immediate antecedents"[11].

Amongst the Buddhists, the Sarvāsti-vādins, quite like the Sāṁkhyists, hold that the cause continues to exist in the effect. In their view, the cause never perishes; when it becomes the effect, it simply changes its modes and acquires a new name. Thus, clay becomes a jar by changing its states or modes, wherein the name 'clay' is lost and the name 'jar' arises. In a like manner, "the aqueous substratum inheres permanently through the phases of water, ice and steam"[12]. To the Vaibhāṣikas, a group of the Sarvāsti-vādins, a thing exists in all the three points of time — past, present and future, though its modes undergo changes every moment[13]. But, according to the Sautrāntikas, another group of the Sarvāsti-vādins*, a thing exists only in the present —neither in the past nor in the future — and is momentary; it is replaced by a completely different phenomenon at every succeeding moment[14].

Since this causal theory of the Buddhists, particularly, of the Sautrāntikas, regards the cause as destroyed before the emergence of the effect, it has been called *Abhāva-kāraṇa-vāda* or the theory of the non-existence of the cause and has been criticised accordingly by the non-Buddhist philosophers of India, specially, by the Sāṁkhyists and the Vedāntins. The principal argument against this theory is that from a non-existent cause an existent effect cannot be produced[15]. If a non-existent cause could produce an effect, a sky-flower could as well produce a jar. Against this, the Buddhists may argue thus: Since logic demands that

*yadyapi vaibhāṣika-sautrāntikayor avāntarabhedo 'sti, tathāpi sarvāstitāyām asti saṁpratipattiḥ—*Bhāmatī*, 2.2.18.

no entity can exist the same for two consequtive points of time, the cause must be regarded as destroyed before the production of effect. This does not mean that the effect is produced from the vacum. The very concept of *Pratītya-samutpāda* brings with it the idea that the destruction of the cause entails the emergence of the effect, That is to say, the effect is always conditioned by the prior existence of the cause. This can in no way be regarded, the Buddhist may say, as the production of the effect from a non-existent cause. But the point is this that though the cause is said to be existing before the effect, no relation is established between the two phenomena. The effect is not derived from the so-called cause, rather it is produced after the destruction of the cause. Hence, in between the so-called cause and the effect, there is a gap or negation. It must, therefore, be said that, according to this theory, the effect arises from the vacuum. But this is logically untenable. The Mādhyamikas are aware of this weakness of the above exposition of *Pratītya samutpāda* as also of other theories of causality. And, hence, they give a new interpretation to this theory.

Nāgārjuna, the greatest exponent of the Mādhyamika philosophy lookes to the world from two stand-points. In his view, all categories seem to be real and objective only from the empirical view-point, while from the transcendental view-point they are unreal or subjective. He says that the world in its real or transcendental nature is identical with *Nirvāṇa*[16] and is, therefore, without any change or causation. The worldly things we perceive to be originating and passing away are, on the other hand, devoid of reality. No real thing is, therefore, produced or destroyed ; there is no cause nor effect, no production nor cessation. "Origination, existence and destruction", says Nāgārjuna, "are of the

nature of *māyā*, dream or fairy castle[17]". And, the world being unreal, the so-called dependent origination refers, according to Nāgārjuna, to the illusory manifestations appearing to the intellect and the senses stricken with ignorance[18].

From the empirical point of view, *Pratītya samutpāda* has been interpreted by Nāgārjuna simply as relativity. It is looked upon as some sort of inexpressible and inexplicable relation of inter-dependence and is technically called *śūnyatā*[19]. Nāgārjuna is forced to hold such a view, since in his opinion all the theories of causality are full of inner contradictions.

The principal theories of causality are *Satkārya-vāda* and *Asatkārya-vāda*. According to the *Satkārya-vāda*, the effect exists in the cause even before its production, and the cause continues to exist in the effect even after production. According to the *Asatkārya-vada*, the effect does not exist in the cause; it is a new creation. Against the *Satkārya-vāda*, Nāgārjuna argues that if a thing exists, it cannot be produced. If the cause and the effect be identical and continuous, there is no reason why some phenomenon should be regarded as the cause, and another as the effect. The theory of *Satkārya-vāda* strictly examined will, thus, lead to the abolition of all differences as well as of all ideas of production[20]. Against the *Asatkārya-vada*, Nāgārjuna says that if a thing does not exist, it cannot be produced at all. If the cause and the effect be distinct and discontinuous, the cause will not be different from a non-cause. Such a cause cannot account for the rise of the effect and, hence, the effect will have to be regarded as emerged from no-where, as it were[21].

The Sautrāntikas, a group of the Sarvāsti-vādins, hold that the cause—say, the seed—ceases to be before the emergence of the effect—say, the sprout. Against this view,

Nāgārjuna says that, if it be so, the cause will not exist when the effect is produced. These two phenomena thus belonging to two different moments, it cannot be explained as to how they can be related as the cause and the effect. For any relation to be established, the two relata must be present at the same time.[22] It may be argued that the cause puts forth some *kriyā* or motion through which the effect comes into being. But this supposition will lead to other complicacies. The motion cannot come into being after the emergence of the effect, since, then, it will be superfluous. It cannot come into being before the rise of the effect, because an action must belong to some entity, but, here, it cannot belong to the cause, as it is already destroyed, nor to the effect, since it has not yet come into being.[23] Nāgārjuna, therefore, concludes that a thing originates neither from itself nor from others, nor from a co-operation of both.[24]

From the arguments put forward by Nāgārjuna, we may say that, according to him, there is certainly some difference between the cause and the effect, but there is no absolute distinction. In a like manner, the cause and the effect have some identity or sameness, but they are not totally identical. And, as difference and identity cannot exist simultaneously, this relation remains a crux to human understanding. The Mādhyamikas, therefore, hold that the concept of *Pratītya samutpāda* or cause-and-effect relation is only relative. They point out that in declaring the maxim 'this is dependent on that' the Revered Tathāgata has clearly said that there is nothing in itself—everything is relative.[25] Again, the insuperable contradictions which confront the different theories of causation indicate, the Mādhyamikas argue, that this relation is merely an appearence or *māyā*. Thus, *Pratītya samutpāda* finally points to the lack of thinghood of the empirical categories and is therefore equated to the unreality

of things—*niḥsvabhāvatva* or *Śūnyatā*.[26] This means that, for the Mādhyamikas, causal principle is only empirically real and that its nature is inexplicable. Causation in the sense of production or origination is a mystry like magical appearances ; it remains to be explained as to wherefrom an effect comes and where it goes[27].

5. DENIAL OF THE PERMANENT INDIVIDUAL SELF

Quite in hamony with the law of Impermanence or Momentariness, the Buddhists hold that there is nothing in the individual which can be regarded as immortal and eternal. as distinct from the elements of individuality, which are non-eternal. There is no such thing as 'permanent self' ; what we call the individual is nothing but a mind-body-complex a *saṁghāta* or aggregate of elements[1].

The elements constituting an individual are called *skandhas* or groups. They are five in number, namely, *rūpa* or the physical body, *vedanā* or feeling, *saṁjñā* or perception, *saṁskāra* or mental disposition and *vijñāna* or consciousness or intellect. Of these elements, the first denotes the material body, while the rest four elements are psychical. An individual is thus merely a combination of the five *skandhas*—a complex of mind and body. And, as all these elements of an individual and their mutual relations are always changing, an individual is merely an aggregate', it is ever-changing, ever becoming without a being. It is fruitless to search for a permanent self in the elements of an individual.

It is very much clear that our psychical elements, namely, sensation, feeling, emotion, etc., undergo changes every moment. As to the incessant change of the physical elements. also, there should not be any doubt. Our respiratory system, blood-circulation-system, the action and reaction of hunger, thirst etc.—all these clearly show that our psycho-physical

organism is always in a process of change. And, though thus all the elements of our individuality undergo continuous changes, we think that in these elements there is some permanent element, to which we apply the term 'I' or 'self'. Actually, however, there is no such permanent. 'I' or 'self' continuing to exist in and through these ever-changing elements of a personality. Such a belief in a constant and immutable self in the individual is an utterly and entirely foolish idea for Buddha.[2] In a dialogue between Śāriputra and Yamaka in the *Saṁyukta Nikāya* it has been said that what appears as the self is only a bundle or combination of ideas, emotions and active tendencies.[3] These elements of the individual are existent by themselves : there is no substratum behind them. Thus, there is no thinker but only thought, no feeling agent but only feeling.[4] Nun Vajirā says that there is no such thing as person ; what we call a 'person' is merely a collocation of changing aggregates, just as a chariot means a collocation of its materials.[5] In the *Milinda Pañha* it has been shown that the name Nāgasena denotes no soul ; it is merely an appealation of the five aggregates constituting the empirical individual.[6] And, as these elements undergo changes every moment, the individual is always in a process of change. Thus, an analysis of the elements of individuality does not point to any permanent self running in and through these elements. Buddha has again and again said that neither any of these elements nor a collection of all the elements can be regarded as the self, because, these are all perishable.[7] In the renowned sermon in Benares, Buddha declares that matter cannot be the self, because, if it were so, the body would not be subject to disease, and one would be able to control the body at one's sweet will. On the same ground, other four aggregates of perception, feeling, disposition and intellect are regarded as

not-self. It is also pointed out that as the five aggregates are ever in change and are accompanied by misery, they cannot be the self. Whatever is impermanent is miserable, and whatever is miserable is not-self.[8] Buddha says to Aggivessana that all the elements of our personality are transient and, as such, painful, and what is painful is not the self. "But that which is tranaistent, painful, subject to all vicissitude, is it possible to regard it: 'This is mine, this am I, this is my self'?[9] Thus, according to Buddha, the analysis of the components of an individual does not reveal a permanent self. A self believed to be persisting in and through the changes of the elements of an individual and migrating from one birth to another is a fiction, for Buddha.

It is argued that the feeling of some identical 'I' in different stages of life points to some permanent substratum continuing to exist in all these different stages. To this, the Buddhists reply thus: The feeling that some 'I' continues to exist for a long time cannot prove the existence of a permanent self. When we say, 'this is that book', we perceive 'this book' with our eyes at the present moment, but the identity between 'this book' and 'that book' cannot be perceived by the sense, because here 'that book' refers to a book seen in the past, whereas 'this book' refers to the book which exists before our eyes. The feeling of identity of an entity is, thus, due to a confusion between an object of memory referring to the past and an object perceived at the present moment by the senses. In the same way, the recognition, 'I am that I' does not speak of the identity of the self. This feeling of self-identity results from the confusion of certain ideas or emotions of the present moment.[10] Self-recognition is, therefore, not a proof for the existence of a permanent self.

It is argued by the Naiyāyikas, who accept a permanent individual self, that at least for the observation of the changes

in the elements, a permanent perceiver, i.e., the self, should be accepted. To this Ratnakīrti replies that for the observation of any 'concomitance in presence' or 'concomitance in absence', no permanent agent is necessary. He holds that when certain conditions are present, there arises the knowledge of the 'concomitance in presence', and when other conditions are present, there arises the knowledge of the 'concomitance in absence.' Granting that the knowledge of the concomitance is subsequent to the concomitance itself, the Buddhists say that the knowledge of the comcomitance of the succeeding moment holds, within itself the experience of the conditions of the preceding moment. It is this experience, they assert, which takes the place of a permanent experiencer.[11]

To one who accepts a permanent self in the psycho-physical set, we may put a question : Is that self identical with or different from the psycho-physical set ? If identical, the self ceases to be permanent, and if different, it cannot be denoted by the term 'I' or 'self'. In other words, such a permanent self is not to be found in the mind-body-complex.

It may be argued that although our ordinary knowledge does not reveal the permanent and immutable self, the existence of such a self can be established on the strength of the realisations of the sages. In reply, we shall have to say, on the strength of the assertions of the sages themselves, that the self realised by them is not the individual self as indicated by the term 'I', but the Universal Self which lies beyond anything conceivable and which cannot be denoted by the term 'I'. If it is held that the Universal Self is the real self, then it will have to be admitted that in the mind-body-complex there is no real and permanent self or 'I'.

The Advaitins may hold that it is correct to say ; 'the mind-body-complex is not the real self', but it is not correct to say : 'in the mind-body-complex there is no self.' In their

view, the individual self is infinite and eternal and is identical with the Universal Self which is self luminous, unlimited, omnipresent and immutable.

According to the Avaccheda-vādins, a group of the Advaitins, this self-luminous, unlimited and immutable self limited by individual ignorance or the mind, is 'seemingly' confined to the psycho-physical organism and 'thinks' itself to be the jīva, the sufferer of birth and death, joys and sorrows etc. Actually, however, the self is not so, because it is identical with the Universal Self which is eternal and infinite. In other words, behind the psycho-physical organism, there is a real and eternal self.

If we examine this Vedāntic contention, we shall see that it is logically untenable, because it is contradictory to say that the self-luminous, unlimited, omnipresent and immutable self 'thinks' itself to be non-luminous, limited and mutable, and to be subjected to joys and sorrows. Just as it is not possible for an unlimited, self-luminous and immutable self 'to be' limited, non-luminous and mutable, so it is impossible for such a self 'to think' it self to be limited, non-luminous and mutable. If it is said that it is because of ignorance that the self thinks so, we shall have to say that it is equally impossible for a self-luminous self to be subjected to ignorance. If it is said that the self is actually not subjected to ignorance, but 'falsely thinks' itself to be so, our answer will be : It is tautologous, since 'falsely thinks' means that it has already been subjected to ignorance. So, if we hold that the self is self-luminous and unlimited, we cannot even say that it is limited by anything like mind or ignorance. That means, limitation or individualisation of an all-pervasive self is false. It is also notable that according to the Avaccheda-vādins themselves, this limitation or individualisation of the self is only seeming, and not real. And, if we proceed a bit further, we shall

arrive at the conclusion that individualisation being false, the individual self is false.

Another section of the Advaitins, known as the Pratibimba-vādins, has realised the unreasonableness of the theory of Limitation or *Avaccheda-vāda* and holds that the unlimited *Brahman* cannot be regarded as limited. To confirm the unlimitedness and immutability of *Brahman*, they hold that *Brahman* is not limited by the mind or ignorance, but is reflected into it.[13] In other words, what we call *jīva* is a *pratibimba* or *reflection of Brahman* and not *Brahman* as it is. Pushing this argument a little further, we may hold that, as the reflection is not *Brahman* as it is, this *jīva* or the individual self is false ; it is a temporary phase and not a permanent entity. And some Advaitavedāntins like Sureśvarācārya and others are bold enough to accept this logical necessity and declare the falsity of the *jīva*.[14] If it is held that 'as the individual self' the self is false, but 'as the Universal Self' it is real, then we may ask, whether the Universal Self exists in one individual only or in all the individuals ? If it exists in one individual, then with the movement of the individual, it will also move, and hence, will suffer birth and rebirth along with the individual. In that case, the self will not be immutable. If it exists in all the individuals equally, then it will have nothing to do with the birth and rebirth of an individual. Such a Universal Self cannot be denoted by the term 'I' and, as such, cannot be regarded as the individual self. Thus, the concept of a permanent individual self is totally untenable, and it is more logical to hold that there is no permanent self.

Acceptance of an Empirical or Provisional Self—a Santāna

Now, the question is : If there is no self, why do we use such terms as 'I' and 'mine' ? Or, if there is no self, what is it that is denoted by the term 'I' ? It can be said in reply

that, though the Buddha does not accept a permanent unchanging self behind the psycho-physical organism, he accepts a provisional or empirical ego, which is not a permanent reality, but a '*santāna*' or chain of ever-changing elements. And, it is this provisional self that is denoted by the term 'I'. What the Buddha means to say is this: Whenever we use the term 'I' or 'self', we denote by it some or all the elements of the psycho-physical set. In other words, an individual thinks himself as something compounded of body, sensations, mind, conformations and thought, or as the body endowed with consciousness.[15] This mind-body-complex is the empirical or provisional self, which serves our practical purposes This self is not permanent since the psycho-physical elements are always changing. Buddha again and again says that the five skandhas are not the permanent and immutable self, because they are perishable. What we call 'I' or the self is, thus, not permanent, but momentary and changeable. And, it is accepted on all hands that a person becomes selfish and maintains hatred against others when he is prone to the gratification of his body and mind. In other words, the mind-body-complex is the root-cause of selfishness, hatred etc. and, therefore, of all pains. That is why Buddha, while accepting the provisional self, pleads at the same time for its destruction.[16] That means, he tells us to destroy that self which is regarded by the ordinary people as identical with the mind-body, or, strictly speaking, which is not the self. Thus, according to Buddha, the psycho-physical organisism—constantly changing and devoid of any substance —is the empirical or provisional self, which, put under strict examination, comes to be untrue. Accordingly, we are advised to annihilate the belief in such a self. This provisional self, being a chain of ever-changing elements, is indicated by the term '*santāna*' or continum, which seems to have been

widely accepted by the later Buddhists as the equivalent of 'personality', as is inferred from such expressions as 'śākyamuni's *santāna*', 'the *santāna* of a multitude of people',[17] and so on. It is this *santāna* or provisional self which gives rise to the idea of 'I-ness'. ["Just as on account of a mirror, an image, which is not real, is seen, so also on account of the *skandhas*, the notion of I—ness, which is unreal, arises. As without a mirror, an image is not seen, so without the conglomeration of elements (*skandhas*), the notion of I-ness does not arise",[18]

Now, if no permanent self continuing to exist in and through the elements of an individual is accepted, some serious objections will arise : First, how can we explain the fact of memory ? Memory indicates identity of the subject at two points of time, because the experiencer and the rememberer must be the same. It can never happen that one knows, and another remembers[19]. Secondly, Buddha is an ardent propounder of the law of *Karman*. But if a continuous self is not accepted, the law falls to the ground. The law of *Karman* states that one is sure to get the fruits of one's own action, and that the doer of an action and the reaper of its fruits must be the same. If a person is always changing, it will have to be said that one acts and another gets the fruit—an assertion which goes against the law[20]. And, thirdly, in the absence of any constant self, how can we explain in the theory of rebirth which the Buddha has so firmly referred to again and again ? In other words, how can we explain the continuity of a person through different births in the absence of a permanent self[21] ?

The Buddhists meet the first objection by referring to the theory of cause-and-effect relation. According to this theory, each momentary entity impresses itself on the entity or effect that follows, and perfumes it, just as a plant of jasmine flower,

grown from a seed imbued with a dye, brings forth jasmine flowers of similar dye. Accordingly, when a person experiences an object, a seed of memory is implanted in the consciousness-continuum, and when this seed ripens in due course of time, memory comes into being by a causal necessity, without the agency of any entity like a perceiver or rememberer.[22] Vasubandhu says that just as there is a series of new productions of motions at different points of space in the case of a moving fire, so in consciousness, there is nothing more than the fact of a series of causally related thought-moments [23] Thus, the fact of memory can be explained by the theory of cause-and-effect relation; it requires not any agent, but only an earlier experience. That is to say, an earlier experience causes the rise of a memory when suitable conditions are present. The same argument can be put forward to meet the second objection, i.e, the objection pointing out the incompatibility of the law of *Karman*. That is to say, the action performed by some point of a *santāna* produces the relevant effect in some later point of the same *santāna* through causal necessity. It cannot, therefore, be said that the law of *Karman* becomes invalid in the absence of a continuous self[24]. The fact of rebirth also can be explained on the basis of the same theory of cause-and-effect series. The actions performed by an individual, whether in the earlier lives or in this life, go on producing series of effects, just as a ripple created in the waters of a pond produces a series of ripples. This chain of actions and the production of their relevant effects goes on without any cessation of interruption through different births. Thus, the accumulated effect of *karman* of a being exist in him in the form of *saṁskāras* or mental dispositions. These effects of actions are transmitted to the last unit of consciousness of a life-continuum. It is this last unit of consciousness called *pratisandhi-vijñāna* that brings about re-existence or rebirth.

This *vijñāna* gives rise to the four mental factors of *nāma* which take as their support or *ālambana* the four material elements or *rūpa*. Thus, through the *pratisandhi-vijñāna* the *karmic* effects of the earlier life[25], stored in the form of *saṁskāras* are transmitted to the next life. Here, there is no necessity of a permanent and constant self ; the continuity of a series of consciousness can explain the position very well. Just as, from a candle another candle—which is different from but causally connected with the earlier one—may be lighted, so from the present state of life the next life comes forth. Rebirth is, therefore, not transmigration or the migration of the same self from one body to another, rather it is the causation of the next life by the present one.[26] The concept of the self is thus replaced by that of an unbroken stream of consciousness or *vijñāna* which acts through different lives. What we call the 'self' is simply a continuum or *santāna*, i e., a chain of the ever-changing elements like perception, feeling, sensation etc. of an individual ; it is not a permanent entity. This concept of *santāna* guided by the iron-chain of causality can explain why there is no overlapping between the succeeding stages of two individuals, say, Devadatta and Haradatta, because the elements indicated by the term Devadatta produce a chain of the succeeding elements similar to themselves, whereas those of Haradatta produce another chain similar to themselves and dissimilar to those of Devadatta.[27] While explaining this concept of an ever-changing self, Nāgasena in *Milinda Pañha* states : Though the flame of a candle changes every moment, it is the same continuum of flame, because the succeeding flame is conditioned by the earlier one. When milk changes into curd, the owner of milk is not confused whether he was right to the curd, because curd is conditioned by milk. In a like manner, the continuity of an individual

through the different stages of infancy, youth and so on is maintained by a causal chain. This is why when the girl-wife becomes aged, the husband is not confused whether he has the right to accept her as his wife or not.[28]

Now, against those who accept a permanent self, we may raise a counter-question : How do the Eternalists explain the fact of memory ? If the self is eternal and immutable, it cannot acquire knowledge even, because acquisition of knowledge involves a change in the subject. Even if it acquires knowledge, it cannot forget any experience, since it is unchangeable. Hence, the question of memory does not arise. In other words, memory implies a gap between the past and the present, which is not possible for an unchanging self. If it is held by the Vedāntins that it is the empirical self or self conditioned by the psycho-physical organism that experiences and remembers, and not the transcendetal self, then we shall have to say that this position will not help them much, since the empirical self cannot at all be regarded as the eternal self. This empirical self is nothing but what is denoted by the term 'I'—the *kartā* (doer), *jñātā* (knower) and *bhoktā* (enjoyer). And, the Vedāntins themselves have rejected this 'I' as not self. Thus, Vācaspati Miśra in his commentary on the *Adhyāsa Bhāṣya* of Śaṅkarācārya, and Madhusūdana Sarswatī in the *Advaitasiddhi* have tried to establish that *'aham'* or 'I' cannot be the self.[29] The Buddhists also say that this 'I' or the empirical self is not the unchanging self—it is not-self—because, it is ever-changing, impermanent, mutable and momentary. If such an emiririeal self is said to experience and remember, then we shall have to say that the Eternalists also, in their final analysis take resort to the Buddhistic position that memory is possible in a changing self. And, it should be accepted that though we use the same term 'I' for different stages of life, we are clearly conscious

that this 'I' has different denotations at different stages of life.

In a like manner, the law of *Karman* also becomes inexplicable if it is held that the self is permanent and unchangeable, since it is the empirical or changing self, and not the permanent self, that performs actions and reaps the fruits of those actions. That means, the law of *Karman* can be explained only by holding that the self is impermanent.[30]

As to the question of rebirth also, we may ask whether the eternal self of the eternalists undergoes birth and death. The Vedāntins, the Sāṁkhyists and others regard the self as devoid of birth and death. In reality, the Vedāntins hold that what undergoes birth and death is not the self, but the *Vijñānamaya-kośa*, i.e., *buddhi* (intellect) and the sense-organs taken together, or the *sūkṣmadeha*—fine body—having mind, sense-organs, motor-organs and vital forces as its elements.[31] And, this *Vijñānamaya*-kośa or the fine body must be accepted as undergoing changes incessantly, because it is subject to *karman*. So, what undergoes birth and rebirth is not the permanent self, but the ever-changing *Vijñānamaya-kośa* or *sūkṣma-deha*—the empirical self; no permanent self is required for the explanation of the fact of rebirth. Thus, in the final analysis, the Vedāntins also have to accept the Buddhistic position that what undergoes rebirth is the changing empirical self—the psycho-physical flux.

Mid-way Course between Eternalism and Nihilism

It will, now, be clear as to why the Buddha regards the self sometimes as existent and at other times as non-existent. That is to say, the self said to be existent is the empirical self, and the self said to be non-existent is the permanent individual self. Buddha is said to hold these two contradictory views, i.e., the 'existence' and 'non-existence' of the self to show a midway course between Eternalism and Nihilism.

The point is this that the different theories of the self centre round the two theories of Eternalism or *Śāśvata-vāda* and Annihilationism or *Uccheda-vāda*. According to Eternalism, the self is an entity which exists for ever without any change. though it is an active agent. The *Majjhima Nikāya* says that according to the Eternalists, the self is the speaker, feeler and enjoyer of the fruits of good and evil actions (*kamma*), is permanent (*nicca*), fixed (*dhruva*), eternal (*śāśśata*), unchangeable (*aviparināmā-madhamma*), and is steadfast like the so-called eternal objects, namely, the sun, the moon, the ocean, the earth and the mountains. According to the Annihilationists, on the other hand, the self, is of the nature of the body and is destructible like the body. But Buddha always declares that he is neither an Eternalist nor an Annihilationist.

Nāgārjuna in his commentry on the *Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtra* says :[82] "The Tathāgata sometimes taught that the *ātman* exists and at other times he taught that *ātman* does not exist. When he preached that the *ātman* exists and is to be the receiver of misery or happiness in the successive life as the reward of its own *Karma*, his object was to save men from falling into the heresy of Nihilism (*Ucchedavāda*). When he taught that there is no *ātman* in the sense of a creator or perceiver or an absolutely free agent, apart from the conventional name given to the aggregate of the five *skandhas*, his object was to save men from falling into the opposite heresy of Eternalism (*Śāśvatavāda*). Now, which of these two views represents the truth ? It is doubtless the doctrine of the denial of *ātman*. This doctrine, which is so difficult to understand, was not intended by Buddha for the ears of those whose intellect is dull and in whom tha root of geodness has not thriven. And why ? Because such men by hearing the doctrine of *anātman* would have been sure to fall into the heresy of Nihilism. The two doctrines were preached by

Budda for two very different objects. He taught the existence of ātman when he wanted to impart to his hearers the conventional doctrine ; he taught the doctrine of *anātman* when he wanted to impart to them the transcendental doctrine". In other words, if the self means the ever-changing or impermanent empirical self—the experiencer of happiness, sorrow, etc.—then 'it is', but if the self means a permanent and immutable individual entity, then 'it is not'.

Similarly, Dharmapālācārya in his commentary on the *Vijñānamātra-Śāstra*, says : "The existence of the *ātman* and of the *Dharma* (i e , of the Ego and of the phenomenal world) is affirmed in the Sacred Canon only provisionally and hypothetically and never in the sense of their possessing a real and permanent nature".[33]

Vasubandhu says, "Buddha's preaching of the Good Law resembles a tigress's bringing up of her cub. Buddha observes how some of his fellow-creatures receive hurt from the heresy of Eternalism, while others allow their good *Karman* to be eaten up by the heresy of Nihilism. Thus, whoever believes the existence of *ātman* in its transcendental sense, exposes himself to the tiger's tooth of the heresy of Eternalism, and whoever does not believe in the existence of *ātman* in its conventional sense, runs the risk of destroying the seeds of his own good *Karman*'[34] This means that Buddha is against both Eternalism and Nihilism.

Nāgārjuna defends the position of Buddha by showing the unreasonableness of the *Śāśvatavāda* and the *Ucchedavāda*. He refutes the *Śāśvatavāda* by holding that a person cannot remain the same in the past and the present. It is not possible for a permanent being having a particular form, he says, to assume different forms in different births. Again, transmigration or passing through death and rebirth is not in harmony with the concept of a permanent being.[35] As regards Buddha's

statements like, 'I was the *cakravortin* king Māndhātṛ' etc.' Nāgārjuna says that the object of such statements is (i) to negate the notion of complete separateness (*anyatva-pratiṣedhakam*) and (ii) to establish the non-identity (*naikatva-pratipādakam*) of the two existences of a transmigrating being.

Against the *Ucchedavāda*, or *Aśāśvata-vāda*, Nāgārjuna argues that if a man and a man reborn as god be looked upon as different, just as a neema tree and a mango tree are then only it could be maintained that the self of man is destroyed and a different self has come into existence. But to maintain such a distinction between a man and a man born as god goes against the theory of *santānānuvṛtti* or characteristic continuity admitted to be existing between a man and a man reborn as god. Thus, the position of the *Uccheda-vādins* is not tenable.[36] And Buddha, to steer a midway course between Eternalism and Nihilism, sometimes accepts the existence of the self and sometimes denies it. It may be said, in accordance with the interpretations of the later Buddhists that Buddha in such cases insists on the *adhikāribheda*,[37] i.e., the difference of the capacities of the hearers. The real position, however, is this that the Buddha and his followers emphatically deny the existence of a permanent individual self imagined to be a concrete agent—thinker doer, and experiencer—and to be different from the psycho-physical organism, yet enshrined in it. Such a self being logically unterable is called *hīnātman* or the lower self by the later Buddhists.[38]

6. (a) DENIAL OF GOD

Most of the scholars hold that Buddha does not accept any reality whatsoever behind the phenomenal world. For Buddha, this world is self-changing and self-forming, and every object in it is a streem of ever-changing elements. All these changing entities are, again, conditioned by their

antecedent causes ; there is no entity in the world which is not conditioned. The world being thus in a process of in cessant change, it is argued, no eternal God can be accomodeted to this system. On the basis of the canonical literature also, it can be said that Buddha denies the existence of any God or Absolute behind the universe. Thus, in the *Majjhima Nikāya*, Buddha is stated to have said that none of the Brahmins can say that he has himself known reality. The Brahmins are regarded by Buddha as a lot of blind men walking one behind the other, none of them seeing in front, at the back or in the middle.[1]

From a pragmatic point of view also, Buddha refuses to accept God. The purpose of Buddha is not to propound any metaphysical theory ; he is mainly concerned with the sufferings of the worldly beings and has taken the task of showing the cause of suffering and the way out of it. He says, "O monks, as before so also now, I preach only suffering and the cessation of suffering.[2] "To state in positive terms, the aim of Buddha is to lead men towards the enlightened life. But Buddha sees that the belief in God cannot help us avoid suffering and attain the enlightened life. The spiritually enlightened life can be attained by pursuing a course of ethical discipline. If a person does not follow this course, God, even though he exists, will not come forward to help him and, if a person follows it, he is sure to attain the enlightened life, even without maintaining any belief in God. A belief in the existence of God has, therefore, got no practical value ; it does not help us in our moral progress. It is *karma*, and not God, that can destroy our sufferings and lead us towards the enlightened life.

Again, Buddha holds that a belief in God will make men illogical, inactive and irresponsible. As God is regarded as the sole cause of the universe, men will throw all the burdens

on him and will not rely on their own efforts. But the Buddha does not want that man should be dependent on something outside himself, rather he wants to make man master of his own fate. And, with this view in mind, he declines to accept any God or Absolute. In consonance with this attitude, Buddha accepts only facts of experience and confines his attention to the phenomenal world. The law of Impermanence, the law of causation, the law of Karman—all these have been propounded by Buddha with a view to explaining the empirical world ; they make no reference to the transcendental reality, if any. From this stand-point, Buddha does not find any ground to accept God or any permanent reality behind the world of universal change.[3] Later thinkers like Vasubandhu, Śāntarakṣita and others also argue in the same line. In the *Abhidharmākośa*, Vasubandhu says, "The assumption that God is the cause (of the world etc.) is based on a false belief in an eternal self (*ātman*)* This belief is realised to be untenable as soon as it is recognised that everything is (impermanent and, therefore) subject to suffering".[4] For the Buddhists, God is merely a result of speculative thinking ; He does not give any explanation to the process of the world.

The Naiyāyikas and other theists argue that every effect presupposes some conscious agent, and that the world, being an effect, points to some conscious agent or God. Again, as a superintending agent of the moral law, as also of the world as a whole, they say, God is to be postulated. In their view, God is perfect, ever-blissful, benevolent, eternal and ever-same ; He is the uncaused cause of the world. Against this view, Buddha and his followers put forward a number of arguments which can be summarised as follows :

* a permanent spiritual substance.

(1) It is true that an effect implies a cause, but it does not necessarily imply that cause should be a conscious being. The unconscious seed develops into a germ, the germ into a tree and so on, without the aid of any conscious principle. In a like manner, the whole world can go without the guidance of any intelligent or conscious cause.[5]

(2) If the world were created by God, it would not undergo any change or destruction, since God, the cause, is regarded as eternal and unchangeable. But in reality, the world undergoes change and decay.[6]

(3) God is regarded as the uncaused cause of the universe. but this is absolutely unthinkable Any event is invariably conditioned by some cause, which, again, is conditioned by another cause, and so on. That some thing is a cause but is itself not caused is self contradictory. It is, there fore, pertinent to ask, 'from what cause has God come into being' ?[7]

(4) God is regarded as too great to be comprehended by men. But if it is so. His nature and qualities must surpass the range of our knowledge and thought. Accordingly, nothing could be said about him, nor could any quality be attributed to Him. It is also contradictory to hold that the conveivable world has come forth from an incomprehensible entity like God.[8]

(5) God is regarded as perfect, whereas the world is full of evils and imperfections. How could a perfect being create such a world full of evils and imperfections ? If all the evils and imperfecitons f und in the world be the work of God, then He Him self must be endowed with these qualities and, accordingly, could never be perfect.[9]

(6) God is regarded as kind and benevolent. Why, then, does He create such a world full of pains and sufferings ? And, why does He not remove all these evils ? The *Bhuridatta-*

Jātaka thus asks as to why God does not make all men happy, and why He does not bring order into the world. If sorrows and sufferings are attributed to some other cause, then God will not be the creator of that cause.[10] If it is said that creatures experience joys and sorrows according to their own deeds, then the law of *Karman* will have to be regarded as the supreme principle, and God will have no role to play. If God cannot alter the effects of *karman*, He is no God at all ; if He has no freedom to grant gifts, He is no Lord.[11] If, on the other hand, it is said that He has the freedom to bestow gifts and boons to the creatures, without considering their *karmans*, then He may give happiness to the wicked and the vicious and grant sorrow to the virtuous. In that case, there will be no harmony in the world.[12]

(7) It may be asked whether God acts with or without some purpose. If He has some purpose, He is not perfect, because purpose means the wish to fulfil some desire or want, which cannot be there in a perfect being. If he acts without any purpose, He must be a lunatic or a fool, since a being who creates such a vast world without any purpose must be very unintelligent.[13] If creation is looked upon as a sport, then God will have to be considered as a child. Moreover, sport means enjoyment, but how can a benevolent God enjoy through the sufferings of the worldly beings ?[14]

(8) If god be the agent or cause of everything, men will have no freedom of will. As God is said to be doing every thing, the unrighteous acts also will have to be regarded as done by him. In that case, men will be competelely helpless, and the teachings and injunctions for the practice of virtue will be meaning-less.[15] Thus, in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Buddha is stated to have said, "Some ascetics and Brahmins hold : Whatever comes to man, happiness or suffering, or neither, all is caused by the will of the creator

(issara-nimmana). But I say: 'So then because of the will of their Creator and God, human beings become murderers, thieves, unchaste, liars, slanderers, covetous, malicious and heretical'. And those who rely on the creation of a supreme God lack the free will to do what is to be done, and to refrain from doing what is not to be done".[16]

(9) If God alone were the cause of every thing, then all things would have been created simultaneously. But, actually, things are produced in succession and in dependence on their respective conditions. The theists argue that God creates things successively, because he takes into account their relationships also. The Buddhists counter that if it be so, God should not be regarded as the sole cause of the effects of the world.[17]

(10) The theists identify their God with Viṣṇu or Śiva or such other divinities. But they attribute to these divinities qualities like hatred, pride, anger, etc. Thus, it is stated in the *Mahābhārata* that Śiva is called Rudra because he burns up, because he is severe, is cruel, and full of fire, and because he gorges himself on meat, blood, and marrow. It is also said by the theists that God loves and favours his devotees and hates and destroys others. All these statements go against the very concept of God as an almighty or perfect Being.[18]

(11) The statements of the theists themselves regarding God are conflicting so much so that different schools attribute the cosmic functions to different divinities. Some regard Brahmā as the creator of the world, some consider Viṣṇu to be so, while others attribute this act of creation to Śiva. None of these views can, therefore, be relied upon.[19]

(12) The greatest contradiction of the theists lies in the fact that, they regard God as the agent of every thing, while, at the same time, they accept the theory of *Karman* also. But

both the law of *Karman* and the agency of God can not be simul taneously operative. If all the beings are guided by their own *Karmans*, God will have no role to play in the moral field of the beings, and if God is said to be doing everything, the law of *Karman* can not stand.[20]

(13) The theists do not deny natural causality. Thus, for example, they accept the causality of water, air etc for the sprouting of a seed. They should, therefore, regard these causes as auxiliaries or *sahakāri-kāraṇa-s* to God. But, as such events can be explained with the help of natural laws, the supposition of some God, in addition, is superfluous.[21] Moreover, if God stands in need of these natural agencies for the production of the corresponding effects. He cannot be regarded as the Lord of every thing.[22]

(14) The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas hold that the four kinds of atmos, as also other substances like *ākāśa*, space, self etc. are eternal. These substances cannot, therefore, be said to be created by God. How can, then, God be the creator of all ?[23]

(15) The doctrine of creation by God becomes meaningful only when an original creation is accepted. But an original creation cannot be imagined, since, according to the law of *Karman*, any event of the world is conditioned by some earlier causes. Moreover, God cannot be the original creator of the world, because we cannot imagine a point of time when God should exist without the world.[24]

(16) The Naiyāyikas hold that, just as there is an intelligent agent, i e., a potter, for the production of a jar, so there must be an intelligent creator for things like trees, mountains etc. But Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla argue that this argument of the Naiyāyikas is untenable, because trees, mountains etc. are so different in nature from a jug that, the same principle cannot be applied to both the cases.[25]

(17) It is argued that, since in natural phenomena there

is a state of arrest followed by a state of motion or production, an intelligent creator must be accepted as the cause of such a motion or production. Against this, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla argue that, if events of nature occur at intervals through the operation of God, then the latter must be regarded as operating at intervals. And, on the strength of the argument of the opponents themselves, such an operation of God at intervals must be regarded as guided by some other agent, and so on ad infinitum.[26]

(18) If God were the creator of the world, everything would heve come into being all at once, since God is no required to wait for any other condition ; the accessory circumstances being the creations of God, cannot be said to assist him in the act of creation. It may be argued that God creates only when He wishes. But Śāntarakṣita counters that the will of God being eternal, it cannot be imagined as to why He should wish to create at some time, and not at another. If, in spite of the eternality of God's will, the production of a phenomenon by God does not entail the production of all other phenomena, then those phenomena connot be regarded as produced by the will of god.[27]

(19) Even if, for argument's sake, it is accepted that there is an intelligent agent behind the phenomena like trees, hills etc, it is groundless to accept only 'one' omniscient creator of all these phenomena.[28]

(20) It is said that God creates, maintains and destroys the world in accordance with the good and bad deeds of beings. If be so, God cannot be regarded as independent [29]

6. (b) DENIAL OF THE ABSOLUTE

Now, there are thinkers like the Advaita Vedāntins who look upon the creator-God as a phenomenal appearance of *Brahman* or the Absolute which is unconditioned, unknowable

and unchangeable, and is devoid of any quality or action. The material world and the empirical selves are regarded by them as mere appearances of that Ultimate Reality. As against this concept of the Absolute, Buddha argues thus :

(1) An Absolute Reality having no relation to anything else cannot be established by reasoning. This universe is a system of relations, and any knowledge implies some sort of relation. How can we know that some thing unrelated to anything else exists at all ?[1]

(2) How can some entity which is not related to anything and not dependent upon any thing produce things which are related to one another and dependent upon one another ?[2]

(3) How can the Absolute which is one and without any difference, produce the world of multiple objects having differences ?

(4) As the Absolute is said to be pervading all things and to be filling all space, it cannot create them, since there is nothing to be created [3]

(5) As the Absolute is said to be devoid of all qualities, all things arising out of it should be devoid of qualities. But, in reality, things of the world are endowed with qualities. How can the attributeless *Brahman* create all these worldly things possessed of qualities and manifest itself in them ?[4]

(6) Since the Absolute is regarded as unchangeable, all things coming out of it also should be unchangeable, because the effect cannot differ in nature from the cause. But all the things of the world undergo change and decay. How can, then, the Absolute be unchangeable ?[5]

(7) If the Absolute pervades all, why should we seek for liberation ? As we ourselves possess the Absolute, there is no meaning in searching for it.

(8) The view of some Vedāntins that *Brahman* has transformed itself into the world of individual selves and matter,

is untenable. The worldly elements, which are without consciousness and activity, can never be the effect of *Brahman* which is looked upon as of the nature of being, consciousness and bliss.[6]

7. THE LAW OF THE WORLD

Buddha does not contribute to the view that the world as a whole, or any phenomenon within it, has come into being, or is going on, by accidence or chance. He holds that not even a single event of the world, however minute or negligible it may be, can happen fortuitiously. For him, the world is under a strict order or regulation. This order of the universe is called *Niyama*, i.e., the process of going on. The later Buddhists distinguish five kinds of *Niyamas*, namely, (1) Kammaniyama or the order of action and its fruits, (2) Utuniyama or the order of the inorganic physical phenomena, (3) *Bījaniyama* or the order of the plants, (4) *Cittaniyama* or the order of the conscious life and (5) *Dhammoniyama* or the order of the norm effect of nature to produce a perfect type.[1] This division of *Niyama* shows that all the elements of the world, mental and non-mental, are going on under a strict order.

Now, the question is this : The theists explain the world-order with the help of their concept of iśvara. According to them, it is īśvara who maintains strict regulation of the world in all its phases of creation, sustenance and dissolution. But how does Buddha, who does not accept any such divine agency, explain the order of the world ?

Buddha says that for the explanation of the order of the world, no divine agency is to be postulated. According to him, in the mechanism of this universe, there is an eternal Cosmic law which is self—operating, and self—regulating. The world—machine is going on continuously from beginningless time, without any maker or designer, because of this

cosmic law. This gigantic cosmos of matter and life—ever-changing and ever-becoming—has thus an unsurmountable law at the centre of it [2]

The unshakeable and firm principle that maintains order and regulation in the world, either in the physical or in the moral sphere, is called *Dharma*. It "is the highest impersonal principle in which our concepts of natural law and moral world-order meet".[3] It is manifested in the multitudes of energies which are also called *dharmas* and which, by their inter-play, produce the outer world and the life of an individual. The *Saṁyukta Nikāya* describes this law to be 'active in this present existence, not bound to any time, open for every body, leading to the goal, and to be grasped at once by the wise'.[4] *Dharma* is active not only in the physical world but also in the norms, rules, duties, rights etc. of the sentient beings. Personality or an individual, too, is a bundle of ever-changing *dharmas*. The impermanence of the world or the process of universal change, the concept of non-self, the path leading to liberation—all these are nothing but expessions of this Law. This principle rules supreme in the universe ; it is revealed not only in the infinite multitudes of forces of the world but also in the sphere of world-transcending *Nirvāṇa*.[5]

The Cosmic Law or *Dharma* ultimately manifests itself as the law of causation which is noting but a continuous conditionalism. It means that every event of the world-either in the physical sphere or in the life of an individual—is conditioned or determined by its antecedent circumstances. The elements or objects of the world have only a dependent origination ; they originate when some particular causes or conditions are present In its external aspect, this conditionalism gives an explanation to the events of the outer physical world, and, in its internal aspect, it accounts for the

birth, growth, death and rebirth of an individual. This conditionalism or the law of causation is called *Pratītya-Samutpāda*. That this conditionalism or *Pratītya-Samutpāda* is nothing but the manifestation of *Dharma*, the Cosmic Law, is clear from the words of Buddha : "He who sees *Pratītya-Samutpāda* sees *Dharma*, he who sees *Dharma* sees *Pratītya-Samutpāda*".[6]

In the moral sphere, the Cosmic Law is revealed as the law of *Karman* which states that every act of aconscious being is sure to bring forth its requisite effect on the doer in due course of time . no person can escape the fruits of his own actions. Thus, according to this law, our life is created by us ; there is not any divine hand or any other outer agency to guide or act upon us. What is lotted to us at the present is the result of our previous *karmans* or actions, and actions done at the present will make the future of our life.[7] "The moral quality of actions performed by body, speech and thought during earthly existence conditions the next birth including the heridity, surrounding, ability etc. Each being is self-originated ; its form is due to the combination of those forces it has created itself in former existence".[8] This law thus declares that man is the architect of his own life ; it is he who can re-make his future by his own endeavour. In his last moments, Buddha instructed his desciples, "O Monks, be ye lamp into yourselves. Be a refuge to yourselves, seek not any external refuge".[9]

Thus, *Dharma*, the Cosmic Law, revealing itself as the law of causality and the law of *Karman* keeps harmony between the natural courses of events and the demands of moral acts. "It shapes the world as well as individuals by its automatic action of cause and effect. The whole universe is nothing but the continuous manifestation of the inexorable censequences of the moral and immoral actions of its countless

living beings. And so, the universe with its realms of heavens, hells, and world resembles a perpetuum mobile driven by *Dharma* and continuously wound up by *karma*".[10] The diversity of the world is caused and regulated by the *karmans* or acts of the creatures that inhabit it. "The world-law shows itself in that all the myriads of individual fates together form one whole. Harmoniously attuned to each other, they constitute the continuously flowing history of the world—without beginning, and without an end".[11] And, as the law of *karman* is nothig but a manifestation of *Dharma*, ultimately the universe is to be regarded as the result of the play of the forces of *Dharma*.

This Cosmic Law is similar to the God of the theists, since it conditions the origin, existence and end of the world, rewards good deeds and punishes evill ones. The *Śikṣā-Samuccaya* says that this law has no connection with pleasure, is impartial, timeless immeasurable like space, devoid of increase or decrease, always constant and invincible. This law is regarded by some as representing the *Brahman* of the Upaniṣads.[12]

8. A FRESH PROBLEM

Now the problem is this : Buddha has never said that 'there is no self' ; he has simply described the elements of individuality as not self But this is not necessarily a denial of the self itself. A. B. Keith observes, "It is noteworthy on examination to find that in the great sermon at Benares on the characteristics of that which is not the self, the doctrine extends emphatically to deny the permanence as existent of all empirical things ; it does not, in point of fact, deny in express terms that there may exist another realm of existence which is exempt from empirical determination, and which, therefore, might be regarded as absolutely real".[1] It is also

remarkable that in the *Brahmajāla-Sutta*, where various views regarding the *ātman* are mentioned, no question is raised whether the self exists or not : the problem discussed there is : whether in some way or other the self is eternal Similarly, in other contexts of the Sacred Canons, the problem raised by Buddha is not 'whether there is any self', but 'whether there is any eternal self in the five *skandhas*'. But as Buddha approaches the problem negatively, the problem ultimately stands as : 'what is the not-self'. And, Buddha describes the elements of individuality as not-self, because, first, they originate and perish, and, secondly, they generate pains in us. He says, "And that which is transient, prinful, and liable to change—is it possible to say of it : 'This is mine', this am I ; this is my self" ?[3] In other words, according to Buddha, that which is transitory, evil and subject to change is not the eternal self. Thus, throughout his sermons, Buddha tries to show as to what cannot be regarded as the self. This does not necessarily mean that he denies the self itself.

When thirty Brahmin-youths inquired about a run-away woman, Buddha told them, "What is of greater importance, O youths, to search for a woman, or to search for your 'I' ?"[4] Now, this 'I' or 'self' spoken of by Buddha cannot be the conglomeration of the physical and psychical elements, because these elements being already there, none should be advised to search for them. Moreover, Buddha always describes the elements of individuality as not-self. So, the 'I' or 'self' spoken hereof must be something lying beyond the elements of the individual. Again, when the monk Vacchagotta inquired 'if there is any self', Buddha kept silent, Then, the monk inquired 'if there is no self', but Buddha again kept silent. When Vacchagotta went away, Buddha, asked by his disciple Ānanda, said, "If I had answered : 'the self is', he would have confirmed the doctrine of the Śramaṇas and the

Brahmins who believe in the permanence of the self. If I had answered : 'the self is not' then he would have confirmed the doctrine of those who believe in the annihilation of the self".[5] This means that Buddha does not propound nihilism, and that, behind the elements of personality, he accepts 'some self' which, however is not the eternal individual self accepted by some philosophers. Hence, the question is : What is the nature of this 'some self' ?

9. THE CONCEPTION OF *NIRVĀṆA*

The question whether the self exists or not is intimately connected with the question of the nature of the enlightened one after passing away from the earthly life, i e , with the problem of the nature of *Nirvāṇa*. Here, the question is this : Does the enlightened one continue to exist or not after the bodily apparatus ceases to operate ? Or, in other words, does *Parinirvāṇa* mean total annihilation of the enlightened one, or some sort of enjoyment in another sphere of existence ? Many scholars, oriental and occidental, have explained *Nirvāṇa* as a state of annihilation or complete extinction of the individual. On the other hand, there are scholars who hold that it is a positive, eternal, pure and infinite state of consciousness and bliss, though to the ordinary human beings its real nature is inconceivable and inexpressible. Burnof, Bishop Bigandet, Paul Dahlke, Oldenberg and others hold the former view, i.e., the view that *Nirvāṇa* is an annihillation or extinction of the individual—an absolute nothing—"a bottomless gulf of annihilation".[1] Rhys Davids, Thomas, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Laksmi Narsu, Dahlmann, Radhakrishnan and others contribute to the latter view, i,e., the view that *Nirvāṇa* is a positive but inconceivable and inexpressible eternal state.[8]

The negative interpretation of *Nirvāṇa* is based on the

following reasons : First, the term *'nirvāṇa'* literally means 'blowing out', which suggests annihilation or extinction. Secondly, the emhatic denial of the self indicates that in *Nirvāṇa* no self can exist. A few passages in the *Milinda Pañha* suggest that after *Parinirvāṇa*, Buddha ceases to exist.[3] There are also passages in the Sacred Canons which indicate that the self is annihilated in *Nirvāṇa* Paul Dahlke refers to such a passage of the *Saṁyukta Nikāya* where Buddha is reported to have said to his disciples thus : "If, ye monks, only so much might permit of being attained of a self that would be permanent, lasting, eternal, unchageable, eternally the same, then a possibility of a life of purity for the ending of all suffering would not be discernible".[4] Thirdly, there are also passages in these canons which compare the state of the attainment of *Nirvāṇa* to the extinction of fire. The *Sutta Nipāta* says, "Just like a flame, a perfect saint freed from name and form, disappears without any trace".[5] The *Dīgha Nikāya* says, "Like the extinguishing of a lamp, Buddha's mind became absolutely freed" [6] The *Ratana Sutta* says, "The old is destroyed, the new has not arisen. Those whose minds are disgusted with a future existence, the wise, who have destroyed their seeds (of existence), and whose desires do not grow, go out like this lamp".[7] And, as the extinction of fire means its total annihilation, *Nirvāṇa* also should be regarded as a state of complete annihilation. Fourthly, the Mādhyamikas identify *Nirvāṇa* with Śūnya, which means 'void' or absolute nothing. On the ground of these reasons, Nirvāṇa has been explained as a state of complete annihilation.

Against this negative interpretation of *Nirvāna*, we have the following anguments. First, the term *'nirvāna'* means not only 'blowing out' but also 'cooling' which suggests not complete annihilation of the self, but dying out of the evil passions only. Secondly, there are passages in the Sacred

canons which indicate that the enlightened one exists in *Nirvāṇa** Thirdly, the comparison of *Nirvāṇa* to the extinction of fire does not necessarily imply the annihilation of the individual in *Nirvāṇa*. We may argue, in tune with N. Dutta and George Grimm, that the extinction of fire does not mean its non—existence, atleast from the Indian stand-point. Even when extinguished, the fire exists in some form or other, though it is not manifested because of the absence of favourable conditions. It is true that, after extinction, the fire cannot be located anywhere, but yet it can be regarded as existing everywhere, since it is dissolved into the endless fire which exists everywhere. In a like manner, though the perfected one cannot be located anywhere, he may be said to be existing everywhere.[8] ***Aggivacchagotta Sutta*** thus declares that *Nirvāṇa* is not extinction but disappearance in the deep ; immeasurable and difficult-to-fathom state of existence.[9] Fourthly, though the Mādhyamikas identify *Nirvāṇa* with *Śūnya*, the term '*Śūnya*' used by them does not mean 'void'. In their view, *Nirvāṇa* or *Śūnya* means an indefinable, immeasurable and unfathomable eternal state to be realised only by the sages.

In reality, Buddha does never describe Nirvāṇa as annihilation ; he simply says that it is an annihilation of false desires and sufferings. Buddha propounds a religion in which *Nirvāṇa* has been declared as the goal of life. If that *Nirvāṇa* be annihilation, Buddha's religion cannot be a religion at all ; it will have to be regarded as a form of heresy not much different from that of the Cārvākas. "If there is no possibility of attaining a higher reality, why should men undergo such a strenuous path of discipline" ? And, for Buddha himself, to regard *Nirvāṇa* as a state of the annihilation of the self is a wicked heresy. He categorically denies the accusation that in his view the self is annihilated in liberation. What he bids men to throw off is, he asserts, only the

empirical self or not self consisting of the five constituents. Thus, he says, "And, monks, against me, thus teaching and preaching, many asceties and Brahmins falsely, groundlessly, untruly, in defiance of fact, bring accusation thus: 'A nihilist is this ascetic Gotama. He preaches the cutting off, the destruction, the nullification of the present living being'. I teach the annihilation of craving, the annihilation of hatred, the annihilation of delusion, I teach the annihilation of manifold evil things that do not pertain to salvation".[10] *Nirvāṇa* is, therefore simply the extinction of the components of our individuality as also of our evil passions and ignorance. It is notable that, a disciple named Yamaka understood the theory of Buddha in the sease that, on the dissolution of the body, the liberated one is annihilated and is no more in existence. Śāriputra, a great disciple of Buddha, called him and explained to him in detail that such a doctrine was not taught by Buddha. He concluded his speech with the words, "By the absence of the influence, he (the liberated one) becomes free and when he is free the becomes aware that he is free". At the close of the conversation, Yamaka submited saying, "I have abandoned that wicked view and completely understood the high doctrine".[11]

Like Buddha, his close disciples also held that *Nirvāṇa* is merely the annihilation of worldly evils. Thus, Śāriputra says, "Annihilation of lust, evil wills and delusion is *Nirvāṇa*." A nun in the *Therīgāthā* says, "Gone out of the fire within, I am now cool". Another nun says, "I have become calm by the attainment of *Nirvāṇa*.[12] All this means that *Nirvāṇa* is the annihilation of the empirical ege, and not of the self. Max Muller and Childers, after a systematic examination of all the passages relating to *Nirvāṇa*, have come to the conclusion that "there is not one passage which would require that its meaning should be

annihilation".[13] Rhys Davids also says, "It is quite clear that it cannot be a state of exctinction of the soul. It is the extiction of the sinful, grasping condition of the mind".[14]

It is not enough to say that *Nirvāṇa* is not annihilation, rather we must admit that it is a positive reality *Nirvāṇa* is declared in the Canonical scriptures as changeless, eternal and immutable and as a state of immertality.[15] After the attainment of enlightenment, Buddha declares, "The doors of immortality are opened". The *Kathāvatthu* describes *Nirvāṇa* as real, eternal and unchangeable, i.e, as devoid of origination, change and destruction. The *Dhammapada* states that one who attains *Ntrvāṇa*, attains immortality.[16] Thus, *Nirvāṇa* is eternal and unchanging, it is *amatapada* or a deathless state shining in its own rediance. The *Vishuddhimagga* says that *Nirvāṇa* is never an extinction, but a beginningless, deathless, formless and eternal state, exceedingly subtle.[17] The *Adhidharma-kośa* also describes *Nirvāṇa* as unproduced and eternal. *Nirvāṇa* is not only eternal, rather it is a state of highest bliss. "Bliss is *Nirvāṇa*, bliss is *Nirvāṇa*",[18] exclaims Śāriputra. The *Dhammapada*, the *Udāna* and the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* also declare *Nirvāṇa* to be a state of bliss, highest bliss and unshakeable bliss.[19] The *Magandiya Sutta* describes *Nirvāṇa* as "the highest happiness".[20] The *Udāna* says, "The delivered ones who have crossed over the stream of the bonds of senses, have reached the unshakeable bliss".[21] The *Milinda Pañha* also indicates that *Nirvāṇa* is a state of infinite bliss. Further, *Nirvāṇa* is described as a state of the nature of pure consciousness. Speaking of the *Parinirvāṇa* of Vakkali Bhikṣu, Buddha says that it is of the nature of *vijñāna* or consciousness which cannot be located anywhere, which is *apatiṭṭhita* or without any support, which is signless, infinite, radiant on all sides, and in which all distinctions cease. *Sarva-Siddhānta-*

Sāra-Saṁgraha asserts that the final deliverance is declared by the sage Buddha to be nothing other than a flow of faultless state of consciousness.[22] *Nirvāṇa* is thus a positive reality and a plane of absolute bliss and pure consciousness. It has been declared by Buddha as a state of highest freedom bliss, great peace, immortality and moral perfection. The *Majjhima Nikāya* says, "*Nirvāṇa* is the highest perfection (*accanta-iṭṭham*)".[23] Accordingly, in *Nirvāṇa*, the enlightened one attains completeness, perfection, peace, bliss, happiness, purity and freshness.

At times, it is true, Buddha has declined to describe Nirvāṇa as a positive state. But it is equally true that he has declined to describe it as a negative state also. Most of the followers of Buddha also follow the same trend. To quote from S. N. Dasgupta, "Any one who seeks to discuss whether *Nirvāṇa* is either a positive and eternal state or a mere state of non-existence or annihilation, takes a view which has been described in Buddhism as heretical".[24] The significance of this attitude of Buddha and his followers is this that, according to them, *Nirvāṇa* cannot be described either as positive or as negative, since it is a state in which all worldly experiences cease It is not possible to describe *Nirvāṇa* either as existent or as non-existent If it is called existent, one may think it to be something perceptible like a jar ; and if it is called non-existent, some may imagine it to be something like a sky-flower. But *Nirvāṇa* is like neither ; it is immeasurable, indefinable and untathomoble. Thus, with reference to the perfected one, Buddha says that he "is exalted above all comprehensibility.···He is indefinable, inscrutable, immeasurable like the great occan. It were false to say : 'He is' ; it were just as false to say : "He is not".[25] In the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta*, he declares that to regard *Nirvāṇa* as existing or non-existing would be falling into the the heresies of Eternalism

and Annihilationism.[26] In the *Alagaddupama Sutta*, Buddha, after an exposition of the doctrine of the not-self, asserts that the nature of the enlightened one is beyond nature and inconceivable even in this life.[27] The *Udāna* describes *Nirvāṇa* as a state where water, fire, air and earth do not reach, where the light of the stars, the sun and the moon cannot reach, and where there do not exist the spheres of either consciousness or non-consciousness.[28] The *Sutta Nipāta* says that the nature of the liberated perfect saint is immeasurable, infinite and inexpressible by conventional language.[29] The *Milinda Pañha* states that none can tell about the form, figure, duration or measure of *Nirvāṇa*. Buddhaghoṣa also describes *Nirvāṇa* as inexplicable and infinite. In a conversation with king Prasenjit, nun Khemā asserts that just as it is not possible to count the sand-particles on the bank of the river Ganges, and to measure the water-drops of the ocean, so it is impossible to ascertain the nature of Tathāgata after death. She says, "The nerfected one, O *Mahārāja*, is free from this, that his essence might be counted with numerals of the corporeal world : He is deep, immeasurable, unfathomable like the great ocean. That a perfected one exists beyond death does not apply ; that a perfected one does not exist beyond death does not apply.[30]

It is very clear from all this that *Nirvāṇa* is never a negative state, rather it is a positive reality—not, of course, in the ordinary sense of the term. It is a state of the annihilation of the false notions and evil passions, and not of the self. But it is so deep and rich that its nature cannot be conceived by human thought ; nor can it be expressed by ordinary human language. At best, it can be described as a State of perfection and immertality, as a state of pure, eternal and infinite consciousness, and as a state of eternal peace and highest bliss. It is not merely the end of pains and

sufferings, but also a positive state of bliss ; it is the highest and purest bliss.[31] We can, therefore, say that, whatever the real nature of *Ntrvāṇa* might be, it is certainly a positive and eternal reality.

The vaibhāṣikas regard *Nirvāṇa* as a positive state of existance. They hold that it is a pure and perfect state free from all pains and evils. T.R.V. Murti says, "The Vaibhāṣikas or any school of Buddhism never took *Nirvāṇa* as nothing, but as an *asaṁskṛta-dharma*, some sort of noumenal unconditioned reality behind the play of phenomena.···As being identical with the state of the Tathāgata after his death, no Buddhist school ever denied its reality. Only it was inexpressible" [32]

According to the earlier Sautrāntikas, *Nirvāṇa* is the end of all manifestations, having no positive counterpart.* It is looked upon as a total extinction of one's individual existence.[33] But this position is subject to serious criticisms. First, the pure and impersonal conciousness attained by the enlightened ones cannot come to an end in liberation, since it is not contradicted by any hostile entity. Secondly, if *Nirvāṇa* be a total extinction of one's individuality, why should it be propounded as the goal of life ? The later Sautrāntikas, therefore, hold that *Nirvāṇa* is not a total extinction. According to them, in *Nirvāṇa* a pure and subtle consciausness continues to exist.[34]

The Yogācāras hold that in *Nirvāṇa* one attains *advaya-vijñāna* or non-dual knowledge. The attainment of *Nirvāṇa* consists in the insight into the Ultimate Reality or Suchness and in the realisation of truth revealed in one's inmost consciousness. Thus, Vasubandhu says that *Nirvāṇa* is absolute, eternal, immutable, devoid of all passions and absolutely pure, and that it is the highest good and infinite bliss lying beyond our speech and comprehension.[35]

The Mādhyamikas declare that *Nirvāṇa* is far beyond

human comprehension: It is neither 'existent' nor 'non-existent' neither 'both existent'. and non-existent' nor 'neither existent nor non-existent'. *Nirvāṇa* is called *Śūnya* in the sense that' being inconceivable and inexpressible, it does not admit of any worldly conception. Thus, in the view of the Mādhyamikas, *Nirvāṇa* is indeterminate. It cannot be described as *vijñapti-mātra* or pure consciousness also, since that position will make *Nirvāṇa* determinate.[36]

* This negative interpretation of *Nirvāṇa* is quite opposed to Buddha's view as summarised above, as also to the expositions of his followers. The present writer is, therefore of the opinion that this is a deviation from the mainstream of Buddhism.

From the foregoing discussion, we can conclude that according to the Buddha and his followers, *Nirvāṇa* is certainly a positive reality—not, of course, in the ordinary sense of the term—what ever its real nature might be; it is never a negative state. And, as the state of liberation means nothing but the real nature of the self, the positive nature of *Nirvāṇa* points to the positive reality of the self. In other words, *Nirvāṇa* is the real self of the enlightened person.

Now, as *Nirvāṇa* or the self of the enlightened person has been accepted as an eternal, unlimited, infinite, inconceivable and inexpressible reality of the nature of bliss and consciousness, we are forced to hold that it is not the limited individual self, but the Universal self. This *Nirvāṇa* or the Universal Self, again, is not something to be acquired afresh. It is always there; our task is only to realise it. The Mādhyamikas, therefore, say that in the world there is nothing except *Nirvāṇa*; everywhere the same *Nirvāṇa* exists. Accordingly, they further hold that there is no least difference between *Nirvāṇa* and *saṁsāra* or the world. It can, therefore, be concluded that though Buddha and his followers strongly deny

the reality of an eternal individual self, they accept the existence of the Universal self,

10. (a) THE UNIVERSAL SELF—NIRVĀṆA—THE ABSOLUTE

The Universal Self spoken of above as identical with *Nirvāṇa*—the uncompounded, unfathomable and immeasurable reality—is only another name for the Absolute. This is clear from the words of Budda himself. He says, "There is, monks, an unborn, unorginated, uncreated, unformed. If, monks, there were no unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed, there would likewise be no escape from the born, orginated, created, formed."[1] Again, he says, "There is, monks, that which is neither earth, nor water, neither fire nor air ; nor infinate space, nor infinate field of consciousness, nor nothingness,.....It is without any support, without begining, without foundation ; just that is the end of suffering"[2]. It is clear that this eternal and unchangeable ground of the world—*Nirvāṇa* or the Absolute—is quite similar to the *Brahman* of the Advaitins.

The world-governor *Īśvara* has, however, been denied by Buddha. The functions ascribed to God or *Īśvara* by the theists have been explained by Buddha with the help of *Dharma*, the Cosmic Law. It is noteworthy that the arguments put forward by Buddha and his followers against *Īśvara* point out only the inconsistencies in the conception of the world-governor God ; they have nothing to say against the Absolute. Here, we must remember that the Advaita Vedāntins also, in their final analysis, deny the reality of the creator-God.

Of course, against the Absolute also, Buddha has put forward a few arguments. But, as in other occasions he has accepted Nirvāṇa as the Absolute Reality forming the basis of the world,* we are forced to assume that the denial of the

Absolute by him is denial only from the stand-point of logic or reasoning, while the Absolute as such is not denied.

Here, it may be noted that though the term '*Iśvara*' generally denotes the world-governor God, it is sometimes used to denote the impersonal Absolute also lying beyond the world-process. Creatorship is thus not the criterion of *Iśvara*-hood ; it is enough for *Iśvara* if He forms the basis of the world and if He is spiritual in nature [3] And, in this sense, the Absolute accepted by Buddha may be denoted by the term '*Iśvara*', though, of course, it is risky to do so, since the term '*Iśvara*', in common usage, brings with it the idea of creator-ship.

Though Buddha accepts the world-transcending *Iśvara* (in the above sense) or the Absolute, he is not eloquent in the exposition of it. Whenever he is categorically asked whether such a Reality exists or not, he keeps silent. He does not say that 'it exists', just as he does not say that 'it does not exist'. The significance of this silence of Buddha is this that such a world-trancending Iśvara or Absolute cannot be grasped by ordinary knowledge, and that we transcend the sphere of our knowledge, whenever we try to say something about it. In other words, by his silence, Buddha emphasises the fact that our experience, knowledge and language are limited and quite inedequate to represent the Ultimate Truth, and that to speak something about it is to transgress the sphere of logic, which Buddha, as an intellecualist, cannot do.[4]

But after all, the Buddha is not merely an intellectualist or a philosopher, but a stage, too. A sage realises what a logician cannot reconcile and what a philosopher cannot understand. Buddha says, "I hava given you a handful of truths, but besides these there are many thousands of truth more than can be numbered".[5] And, from the foregoing study, we can conclude that Buddha, on the basis of his own

realisation, regards *Nirvāṇa* as the Ultimate Reality or the real self of beings. But since this Reality lies beyond the chain of causality, and, hence, beyond human understanding and expression, whenever any thing is asked about it from a philosophical point of view, Buddha keeps silent.

It is remarkable that the Upaniṣads also, in their final assessment, hold, that the nature of *Brahman* can be expressed only negatively as 'neti neti'—'not this, not this'—and that it can be best expressed by silence The teaching of the Upaniṣads is this that 'whereof we cannot speak, we must keep silent'. But though not logically proved, the Absolute can be realised, the Upaniṣads assert, by the enlightened ones —the stages. And, the Buddha who has fully relised the nature of the Absolute, accepts its reality as a sage, though he declines to say anything about it as a philosopher, We may, therefore, conclude with the words of George Grimm, "……the Buddha brought the Vedānta to its utmost perfection ……. He is the true Brahmin, who has completely realised the ideal of the Upaniṣads.[6]

10. (b) THE CONCEPT OF THE ABSOLUTE IN THE LATER BUDDHISTIC SYSTEMS

From the above discussion, it is very clear that Buddha regards the Absolute or *Nirvāṇa* as a positive reality, and not as a void, but yet he gives more emphasis on its unfathomable and inexpressible nature*. And, among all the latter Buddhistic thinkers, it is the Mādhyamikas who have fully maintained this central conception of the Absolute as held by Buddha. The Yogācāra-Buddhists propounding the doctrines of *Ālaya-vijñāna* and *Tathatā*, and most of the Chinese and the Japanese systems have, however, proceeded clearly with a positive conception of the Absolute. Let us, now, have a bird's-eye

view about the conception the Absolute as found in all these systems.

(i) It is held by the non-Buddhist thinkers of India that, to the Mādhyamika-Buddhists, the universe is *śūnya* or void and is devoid of any reality. That is to say, according to this view, the Mādhyamikas are nihilits who do dot find any reality anywnere, within or without. *Nirvāṇa*, the summun bonum of life, is also, it is said, a state of voidity. But a close examination of the philosophy of the Mādhyamikas shows that they are not at all nihilists, For they do not deny all reality ; what they deny is the absolute reality of the phenomenal world. Thus. according to the Mādhyamikas, there are two kinds of truth : one is *samvṛti-satya* or the empirical truth manifested to the ordinary people, while, the other is *paramārtha satya* or the transcendental truth revealed to the enlightened ones. And, considered from these two points of view, the term '*śūnya*' bears two meanings : From the phenomenal point of view, it means *svabhāva śūnya* or devoid of independent substantial reality, while from the transcedental point of view, it means *prapañca śūnya* or devoid of expressibility, comprehansibility and plurality.[1]

In the view of these thinkers, the principles of dependent origination, impermanence etc. propounded by the Buddha, apply only to the empirical world and not to the transcendental plane of reality. Thus. the term '*śūnya*' means that the phenomenal world is without any essence or truth ; it is an appearance, a net-work of unintelligible relations. In Candrakīrti's view, the Mādhyamikas simply point to the relativity of the phenomenal world ; they do not deny its reality. The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* also holds that it is the indeterminable and in describable nature of things that is called *śūnyatā* or voidness.[2] Again, the term '*śūnya*' indicates that the transcendental reality, is non-dual or devoid of plurality, and that

it is inexpressible by human language, since it cannot be indicated by such thought-categories as 'is', 'is not', 'both is and is not', and 'neither is nor is not'.[3] That is to say, *śūnya*, the transcendental Reality, is neither existent nor non-existent. It is transcendent not only of all affirmations but also of all negations and, hence, is an incomprehensible something to be realised only in non-dual transcendental wisdom. Thus, Śūnya is a symbol of the Absolutr, which is *avācya* or *anabhilapya*. i.e, inexpressible. Nāgārjuna says that *Śūnya* is (1) beyond destruction, (2) beyond production, (3) beyond dissolution, (4) beyond eternality, (5) beyond oneness, (6) beyond plurality, (7) beyond ingress and (8) beyond egress.[4] Again, he says that (1) it is that experience which cannot be imparted by any one to another ; (2) it is quiescent, unaffected by anything of the empirical world ; (3) it is inexpressible by the verbalising mind, i.e., non-determinate ; (4) it is transcendent of discursive thought ; (5) it is non-dual.[5] It is clear from this exposition that Śūnya is identical with *Nirvāṇa* and that it is the *paramārtha-satya* or the transcendental truth.

In the view of Nāgārjuna, to an enlightened person, there is not the slightest difference between *Nirvāṇa* and *saṁsāra*. The same Reality is regarded as *saṁsāra* or the phenomenal world, when it is regarded as associated with causes and conditions, and as *Nirvāṇa*, when it is regarded as lying beyond the law of causality. Thus, from the transcendental point of view, the same *Nirvāṇa* exists every where ; it is immanent in the elements of the phenomenal world, as well as in every individual. Of course, it is quite distinct from the world as is perceived by the ordinary people. Nāgārjuna, therefore, says that *Nirvāṇa*, the enexpressible Absolute, cannot be identified with anything definable.[6]

(ii) According to the Yogācāra-Buddhists, there is only one category called *Vijñāna* or *Ālaya-vijñāna*. Some Yogācāras identify it with *Śūnyatā*, some with *Tathatā* and others with *Tathāgatāgarbha*—each of which represents the Absolute. This *Vijñāna* or *Ālaya-vijñāna** is the undifferentiated Mind or the Absolute Mind. It is the truest

Reality, the Absolute Reality, which is free from origination, existence and destruction—*utpāda-sthiti bhaṅga-varjam*—and is, therefore, called *parinispaṇṇa* or self-complete. It lies beyond the subject, and the object yet it forms the very ground of both the subjective and the objective realities which are its manifestations. It is the permanent ground of all the psychical events, on one hand, and of the multiple objective world, on the other. *Ālaya-vijñāna* is thus the permanent, immortal and never-changing store-house of consciousness—the super-individual and all-conserving Universal Mind underlying the momentary mainfestations and the apparent subject-object-duality [7]

The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* says that *Ālaya-vijñāna* is the Absolute and is identical with *Tathatā Tathāgata garbha*. This *Ālaya-vijñāna* is the all-pervading Cosmic Mind existing at the bottom of the subjective consciousness and the objective world. All the external objects and the subjective or mental modes are nothing but the transformations of this Cosmic Mind ; there is nothing other than *Ālaya-vijñāna*. When

* According to this system, there is some styre-consciousness or *ālaya-vijñāna* behind the surface-consciousness. This *ālaya-vijñāna* represents the transmigrating self of the Brahmanical systems It is however, not a permanent substance, but a flux. In *Nirvāṇa*, it assumes its true nature of unlimited pure consciousness, which is also called *Alaya-vijñāna*. That means, in its real nature, Alaya-vijñāna is infinite, pure and eternal universal consciousness.

true knowledge dawns, the ego and the objects of knowledge are realised as unreal, as a result of which, the subject-object relation also vanishes. It must also be said that, according to the *Lankāvatāra-Sūtra, Ālaya-vijñāna* is eternal and unchangeable, since *Tathāgata-garbha,* which is regarded as identical with *Ālaya-vijñāana,* is declared here as eternal and immutable.[8]

To Vasubandhu, *Vijñāna* or *Vijñapati-mātra,* the eternal pure consciousness is the Ultimate Reality. *Ālaya-vijñāna* or the Cosmic Mind is the dynamic aspect of this Reality. The external objects and subjective elements have no reality of their own, since they are nothing but the transformations of *Ālaya-vijñāna.* In other words, *Ālaya-vijñāna* is the ground of the subjects and the objects of the empirical world. It constitutes the whole universe ; all things arise from it and ultimately return to it. In its real nature, however, *Ālaya-vijñāna* is eternal and immutable pure consciousness and is identical with *Vijñapati-mātra,* the Ultimate Reality. Thus, *Vijñāna* or *Vijñapti-mātra* or *Ālaya-vijñāna* in ite real nature is the only Reality behind the phenomenal world ; it is the Absolute.[9]

Asaṅga accepts Suchness or *Tathatā* as the Absolute In his view, *Tathatā* is uncaused and unconditioned ; it is neither born nor destroyed, neither increasing nor decreasing ; it is unchangeable, immutable and eternal. Further, Asaṅga says that *Tathatā* can be described neither as existence nor as non-existence. That means, it is an indefinable reality transcending ordinary knowledge and linguistic expression. Of course, it is sometimes called *bhāva* or existence only to indicate that it is not *abhāva* or nothing. Actually, however, if is not existence, just as it is not non-existence. Asaṅga says that *Tathatā* is that in which the positive and the negative become one and the same : it is a state complete in itself, Again, *Tathatā* is the

essence of the whole universe and is immanent in all things. The phenomenal world is a manifestation of *Tathatā*, apart from which the former cannot exist. Dharmapāla also says that *Tathatā* is real and eternal, and that it is the transcendental truth behind everything [10] This *Tathatā* is described in the *Lankāvatāra-Sūtra* as *Śūnyatā* or voidity also, which is regarded as one and without origination. In the same work, *Tathatā* has been identified with *Tathāgata-garbha*[11]. It is very clear from the above that this dectrine of *Tathatā* as the unconditioned Ultmate Tputh comes very near to the Advaitic doctrine o *Brahman*.

In the *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṅkāra-Śāstra*, Asaṅga declares *Mahātman* as the Ultimate Reality. He advises the aspirants for Buddha-hood to 'take refuge from the bane of individualism in the mightily advantageous doctrine of *Mahātman*', the Great or Universal Self Further, he uses the term '*paramātman* as a synonym of '*mahātman*'.[12] In the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sūtra*, this *Mahātman* is identified with *Tathāgata-grabha*, which literally means, 'the womb of the Tathāgata, i. e , the treasure or store in which the essence of Buddha-hood remains concealed under the veil of *avidyā* or ignorance. It is also said that *Mahātman* is only another name for Buddha-hood.[13]

From the fore-going discussion, it is very clear that the Yogācāras and the Mādhyamikas accept some Ultimate Reality behind the universe. But. in these systems, the relation between that Ultimate Reality or the Transcendental Truth and the phenomenal world has not been sufficiently explained, though it has been accepted by both these systems that the noumenon and the phenomenon are inseparable. That is why these systems are regarded by some scholars as partially developed Mahayanism. In the theory of *Bhūtatathatā* or Suchness expounded by Aśvaghoṣa, however, the relation between the noumenon and the phenomenon has been expli-

citly and systematically explained. The Chinese school of Tientai, the Japanese school of Nichiren and some other schools like Avataṃsaka , Dhyāna, Sukhāvatī-vyūha etc. have accepted this fundamental idea of Aśvaghoṣa and have taken it to its necessary extreme. These systems are, therefore, called the fully developed Mahāyānism.[14] Among these schools of fully developed Mahāyānism, again, the systems of Tien-tai and Avataṃsaka mark the furthest development. The Suchness-philosophy of Aśvaghoṣa stands in between the two groups of partially developed Mahāyānism and fully developed Mahāyānism.

Let us now see how the problem of the Absolute and its relation to the phenomenal world has been dealt with in these three systems– Bhūta-tathatā, Tien-tai and Avataṃsaka :

(1) Literally, *'Tathatā'* means 'Suchness' or 'existence as such and *'Bhūta tathatā'* means 'suchness of being'. *Tathatā* or *Bhūta-tathatā* is, therefore, identical with *'paramārtha-satya* or Transcendental Truth ; it is the Absolute—infinite. imperishable and immitable. It is held that *Tathatā* or suchness does not admit of any definition It cannot be described either as 'is' or as 'is not', because these expressions are applicable to the objects of the empirical world only, while *Tathatā* is beyond all empirical determinations. That means, *Tathatā* is neither 'existence'. nor 'non-existence'. Again, it is neither 'both existence and non-existence', nor a 'negation of both existence and non-existence.' Further, it is neither unity nor plurality, neither both, nor neither. *Tathatā* is thus beyond all human comprehensions and expressions ; it can be indicated only by negations (like 'not this' 'not this' of the Upaniṣads) and is, therefore, regarded as 'śūnya' or void. But though incomprehensible and inexpressible, *Tathatā* is not something negative, rather it is a positive reality—not, of course, in the ordinary sense of the

term. Not only that, it is the only reality—the Universal Self or the real self of beings. When the veil of ignorance concealing our knowledge is removed, the real nature of Suchness is realised. This *Bhūta-tathatā* is called *Nirvāṇa*, when it is said to destroy our passions, to put an end to our pains, and to bring to us absolute peace ; it is called *bodhi* or perfect wisdom, when it is regarded as the source of intelligence ; it is called *paramārtha-satya* or the Highest Truth, when its epistemological feature is considered ; it is called *Tathāgata-garbha* or the womb of Tathāgata, when the analogy from Mother Earth is drawn ; and it is called Mahāyāna or the Great Vehicle, when it embraces the selves of all living beings[15]

Aśvaghoṣa has shown two aspects of Suchness, namely, 'true-ness as negation' or '*śūnyatā*', and 'true-ness as affirmation' or '*aśūnyatā*'. In the negative aspect, *Tathatā* is completely free from all the attributes of the phenomenal realities. In other words, the true nature of Suchness is absolutely free from relativity, individuality, conditionality etc. In the positive aspect, *Tathatā* contains infinite merits, and is self-existent ; it is the pure Self—eternal, permanent, infinite, imperishable and immutable. Thus, Suchness has a positive aspect, though it is not like the positive realities of the phenomenal world Of these two aspects of Suchness, the aspect of 'true-ness as negation' has been dealt with by the Mādhyamikas and the Yogācāras also, but the aspect of 'true-ness as affirmation' has not been explicitly described by them, though this idea implicitly exists in their doctrines.[16]

By the theory of Bhutatathata, Asvaghosa tries to establish identity between the real and the unreal, i.e, between the noumenon and the phenomenon He says that between water and its waves, water is real and the waves are unreal, but yet they cannot exist apart from each other. In a like manner, the noumenon is real and the phenomenon is unreal, but yet

they cannot exist apart from each other. The greatest importance of *Tathatā* is this that, it not only transcends the empirical world but also comes into contact with it. The Absolute or *Tathatā*, through some mysterious act of self-determination, affirms itself as the *ālaya-vijñāna* or receptacle intelligence. Again, this Absolute or *Tathatā*, under the influence of ignorance manifests itself as the self or perceiver, on one hand, and as the objective or external world, on the other.[17]

(2) The Tien-tai-system holds that the phenomenal world is śūnya or unreal. The events of the world, according to this system, are only cenventional, since they are subject to the law of causation. The law of causation, on its part, is nothing but an active principle of Truth or Reality Hence, the individual entities of the universe are not independent realities ; they are the manifestations of Truth or the Supreme Reality.[18]

(3) The Avataṁsaka school holds that the universe is the manifestation of the Great Spirit or One Mind. This One Mind is not finite or relative, rather it is infinite and absolute. That is why it is called *Dharmakāya* or the Absolute Reality also. Further, this One Mind or the Absolute Reality is regarded as all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving. The relation between the One Mind and the universe is like that between the moon or the stars and their reflection in the occan. In other words, the objective world is a reflection of the One Mind. The Avataṁsaka school further holds that the phenomenon and the nounenon are in full concert with each other ; none of them can exist apart from the other, just like water and the waves of the ocean. Again, according to this system, the manifold world, being a manifestation of One Reality, is, from the noumenal point of view, devoid of multiplicity ; all distinctions and contradictions of the phenomenal world ultimately merge into the Absolute, the One Mind.[19]

1. MEANING OF THE TERM 'ĀTMAN' AND THE BUDDHISTIC PROBLEM

1. Chāndogya Upaniṣad, VI. 8, 7 ; Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad II.5.19.
2. jīvo nāma antaḥkaraṇāvacchinnaṁ caitanyam—Vedānta-Paribhāṣā, Pratyakṣa-Pariccheda.
3. nanu ko, yaṁ jīvo nāma ?···brahmaiva avidyā-prati-bimbitam iti vadāmah—Pañca-Pādikā-Vivaraṇa, IX Varṇaka.
4. SBT., pp. 16-17.
5. Kathāvatthu, Puggala-Kathā ; N. Dutt : Buddhistic Sects, pp. 196-199.
6. DB., pp. 125, 139 (foot-note).
7. SBT., pp. 18-19.
8. MN.,'XII, p. 185.
9. Ibid, I. 115, 138.
10. IP., p. 467.
11. Glasenapp, Buddhism, pp. 52-3.

2. THE THEORY OF MOMENTARINESS

1. SN., XXII. 12, 18, 66, 90 ; MN., 26.
2. SN., referred to by Oldenberg, Buddha, p. 249 ; see IP., Vol. I, pp. 368-9.
3. IP., Vol. I, p. 370.
4. SDS., Ch. II ; TS., Sthirabhāva-Parīkṣā ; Kṣaṇabhaṅ-gasiddhi,
5. SN., XXII, 30 ; Abhidhammattha-Saṁgaha, VI, 15.
6. IP., Vol. I, p. 373. Suzuki's translation of Mahāyāna-Śraddhotpāda, p. 105.
7. See SBT., p. 11 : Viśuddhimagga, Ch. III.
8. Central Conception of Buddhism, p. 42 ; SBT., p. 137.

9. The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux, p. 1.
10. Early Buddhism, pp. 56-57, quoted by Sogen, SBT., p. 8.
11. TS., verse 588, Milinda Pañha, II. 2.9.
12. Kṣaṇabhaṅga-Siddhi, pp. 20-21. See Nyāya-Mañjarī II, pp. 16-17.
13. SDS., Ch. II.
14. TS., verse 392.
15. SDS., Ch. II.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Kṣaṇabhaṅga-Siddhi.
19. Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sūtra ; SBT., p. 9.
20. Sāṁkhya-Tattva-kaumudī.

3. POSITION OF THE WORLD.

1. IP., Vol. I, pp. 616, 639.
2. Ibid, p. 619.
3. Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra, pp. 32-33; Viṁśati 1 ; Triṁśikā 17; IP, Vol. I, pp. 626-8.
4. MK., I. 1 and XVIII, 9.
5. Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra, II. 135
6. Vṛtti on MK., XXIV. 7 ; MK., XXV. 17.

4. THE LAW OF CAUSATION

1. CPB, p. 133 ; na svata utpadyante bhāvāḥ tadutpādāvaiyarthyāt, atiprasaṅgadoṣāc ca—Vṛtti on MK, 1.3, p.5.
2. CPB., p. 133 ; Vrtti on MK., I. 3.
3. MK., XX. 19-20.
4. asmin sati idaṁ bhavati—AK, III. 18, 28 ; imasmin sati idaṁ hoti, imass·uppāda idam uppajjati—Udāna, I. 1.
5. IP., Vol. I, p. 371.

6. sa pratītya-samutpādo dvādaśāṅgaḥ—AK., III. 20.
7. AK., III. 18, 28; Causation in Indian Philosophy, p. 91.
8. MN., XXVIII. 3.
9. Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sūtra. See IP., Vol. I, p. 370.
10. Ibid
11. Stcherbatsky : Buddhist Logic, p. 119
12. SBT, p. 136.
13. IP., Vol. I, pp. 616, 639.
14. Ibid, p. 619.
15. Śaṅkara's comt. on Brahma-Sūtra, II. 2.6 (nāsato 'dṛṣṭatvāt).
16. MK., XXV. 19.
17. yathā māyā yathā svapno gandharva-nagaraṁ yathā. tathotpādas tathā sthānaṁ tathā bhaṅga udāhṛtaḥ—MK., VII. 34. See CPB., p. 177.
18. MK, Chs. I & VII.
19. yaḥ pratītya-samutpādaḥ śūnyata saiva te matā—quoted in Bodhi-Caryāvatāra-Pañjikā, see CPB., pp. 166, 195.
20. bheda-vyavahāroccheda eva syāt—Pañjikā on TS, verse 26.
21. MK., XX. 19-20.
22. asti aṅkuras ca na hi vīja-samāna-kālaḥ—Mādhyamikāvatāra of Candrakīrti, VI, 17, see CPB., p. 173.
23. Vṛtti on MK., I. 5-6 ; CPB., p. 174.
24. na svato na parato na dvābhyām—MK., I. 3.
25. Vṛtti on MK., VII. 15, p. 65 ; CPB., p. 194.
26. See 19 above.
27. māyayā nirmitaṁ yac ca hetubhir yac ca nirmitam. āyāti tat kutaḥ kutra yāti ceti nirūpyatām—Boddhi-Caryāvatāra, IX, 140.

5. DENIAL OF THE PERMANENT INDIVIDUAL SELF

1. MN., XLIV ; SN. XXII 117.
2. MN , XXII
3. SN., XXII. 95
4. Ibid, II. 13, 62 ; Milinda Pañha, III. 5.
5. Therīgāthā, verse 10.
6. Milinda Pañha, II. 1.1
7. SN., XXII. 6, 22, 85 ; MN., II & XXXV ; Mahāvagga I. 8.
8. SN., XXII. 59.
9. MN ,XXXV. see DB., p. 120.
10. History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 162 ; Nyāya-Mañjarī, Kṣaṇikatva-vāda-nirākaraṇa ; Bhāṣya on Pudgala-viniścaya of AK.
11. Kṣaṇabhaṅga-Siddhi of Ratnakīrti.
12. Vedānta-Paribhāṣā, Ch. I.
13. Pañca-Pādikā-Vivaraṇa, IX Varṇaka.
14. darpaṇe pratibimbitaṁ tato bhinnaṁ svarūpato mithyaiva-Siddhānta-Leśa-Saṁgraha, II. 4.2
15. SN., V. 10 ; MN. CIX.
16. SN., XXII. 117 ; See MN. I. 115, 138.
17. Keith : Buddhist Philosophy, p. 174 ; MK., XXVII. 22 and Vṛtti on it ; Bhāṣya on AK., II. 25 and on Pudgala-Viniścaya of AK.
18. Vṛtti on MK., XVIII. 1
19. SDS., Ch. II ; TS., verse 500.
20. SDS., Ch. II ; TS., verse 476.
21. SDS., Ch. II and Abhyankara's comt. on it.
22. SDS., Ch. II ; TS. verses 502-505.
23. Keith : Buddhist Philosophy, p. 175 ; see Bhāṣya on Pudgala-Viniścaya of AK.
24. TS , verse 504.

25. Triṁśikā, verse 19 and comt. on it ; Early Monastic Buddhism, pp. 224, 240 ; Milinda Pañha, III. 5 ; AK., III. 24.
26. Milinda Pañha, III. 5 ; Vṛtti on MK, II. 25 ; AK., III. 24.
27. SDS., Ch. II.
28. Milinda Pañha, II. 2. 10-14
29. Bhāmatī on Adhyāsa-bhāṣya.
30. TS., verse 503.
31. Vedānta-Sāra, 67.
32. SBT., pp 18-19.
33. Ibid, p. 19.
34. Ibid, p. 19.
35. MK., XXVII. 15.
36. MK., XXVII. 16.
37. MM. Umesh Mishra, History of Indian Philosophy, p. 377.
38. SBT., p. 20.

6. (a) DENIAL OF GOD

1. MN., XCV. See Buddhism, P. 40.
2. MN., XXII. See DB., p. 141.
3. IP., Vol. I, pp. 453-6.
4. īśvarādiṣu nityātma-vipayāsāt pravartate. kāraṇā-bhiniveśo, to duḥkhadṛgdheya eva saḥ—AK., 5.8 See Sphuṭārthā on ibid.
5. BC See IP., Vol. I, pp. 455, 457.
6. BC, See IP , Vol. I, p. 456.
7. IP , Vol. I, p. 456.
8. acintyasya ca kartṛtvam apy acintyaṁ kim ucyate—Bodhiāryāvatāra, IX, 117.
9. BC. See IP., Vol. I, p. 456.
10. BC. and Sarva-Siddhānta-Sāra-Samgraha. See IP., Vol. I, pp. 456, 458.

11. BC. See IP., Vol. I, p. 456.
12. Sarva-Sibdhānta-Sāra-Saṁgraha. See IP., Vol. I, p. 458.
13. BC. See IP., Vol. I, p. 456.
14. yadi ceśvaro narakādiṣu prajām, bahubhiś ca itibhir upasṛṣṭam sṛṣṭvā tena prīyate, namo'stu tasmai tādṛśeśvarāya—Bhāṣya on AK., II. 64; Sarva-Siddhānta-Sāra-Saṁgraha. See IP., Vol. I, p. 458.
15. Sarva-Siddhānta-Sāra-Saṁgraha. See IP., Vol. I, p. 458.
16. AN., Vols. I-III, 61-3; MN.; CI. See Buddhism, p. 40.
17. neśvarādeḥ kramādibhiḥ—AK., II. 64; yadi hi ekam eva kāraṇam īśvaraḥ syāt···yugapat sarveṇa jagatā bhavitavyaṁ syāt. dṛśyate ca bhāvānāṁ krama-sambhavaḥ—Bhāṣya on Ibid.
18. yadi hi ekam eva īśvaraḥ syāt mahādevo vā vāsudevo vā···Sphuṭārthā on Ibid: "yan nirdahati yattīkṣṇo yadugraḥ···rudra ucyate" quoted from Mahābhārata in Bhāṣya, AK., II. 64.
19. Mahāprajñā-Pāramitā I, P. 562. See Buddhism, p. 37.
20. karmaṇaḥ sukha-duḥkhe ca vada kim tena nirmitam—Bodhi-Caryāvatārā, IX, 119. See Buddhism, p. 38.
21. sahakāriṣu cānyeṣu kāraṇeṣu īśvaro neśvaraḥ syāt—Bhāṣya on AK., II. ; Bodhicāryāvatāra, IX, 121; Buddhism, p. 38.
22. cf. kṣmādi-svabhāva īśaś ca jñānaṁ jñeyād anādi ca—Bodhicāryāvatāra, IX, 118; Buddhism, p. 38.
23. athādisarga īśvara-hetukaḥ? tasyāpi anya-kārāṇā-napekṣatvād īśvaravad anāditva-prasaṅgaḥ—Bhā on AK., II. 64.
24. kasmāt sadā na kurute na hi so, nyamapekṣate—Bodhicāryāvatāra, IX, 120.

25. TS, Īśvara-Parīkṣā, 61 ; tanu-taru-giri-prabhṛtiṣu—hetutvena upādīyeta—Pañjikā on Ibid.
26. TS. and Pañjika, Īśvara-Parīkṣā, 90.
27. Ibid, Puruṣa-Parīkṣā, 164, 167 ; Īśvara-Parīkṣā, 87.
28. Ibid, Īśvara-Parīkṣā, 73, 92.
29. Ibid, Puruṣa-Parīkṣā, 158, 161.

6. (b) DENIEL OF THE ABSOLUTE

1. BC. See IP., Vol. I, p. 457.
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. Ibid
6. Ibid.

7. THE LAW OF THE WORLD

1. IP, Vol. I, p. 374.
2. Viśuddhimagga, XVII ; IP., Vol, I, p. 374.
3. Glasenapp, Buddhism, p. 49.
4. SN., I. 2. 10 ; Glasenapp, Buddhism, p. 52.
5. Glasenapp, Buddhism, p. 49.
6. MN., XXVIII. 3.
7. vaiśva-rūpyaṁ hi karmajam—TS., Īśvara-Parīkṣā, 80 ; Central Conception of Buddhism, pp. 31-2.
8. Glasenapp, Buddhism, p. 51.
9. Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra.
10. Ibid, pp. 49-5 .
11. Ibid, p. 51.
12. Ibid, pp. 52-3.

8. A FRESH PROBLEM.

1. Keith : Buddhist Philosophy, p. 61.
2. See DB, pp, 125, 139, 369.
3. MN., XXXV. See DB., p 142.

4. Mahāvagga, I. 14. See DB., p. 114.
5. SN ; XLV. See DB., p. 140.

9. THE CONCEPTION OF NIRVĀṆA.

1. IP., Vol. I, p. 452.
2. The Concept of Liberation in Indian Philosophy, p. 56.
3. Milinda Pañha, III. 5.10 ; IP., Vol. I, p. 448.
4. SN., III. 144 ; See The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux, p. 240.
5. Sutta-Nipāta, V. 99-101.
6. Dīgha Nikāya, II. 15, p. 156.
7. khiṇaṁ purāṇaṁ navaṁ natthi sambhavam virattacittā āyatike bhavasmin.··· nibbānti dhirā yathā'yaṁ padīpo—Ratana-Sutta, 14 ; see The Buddist Philosphy of Universal Flux, pp. 240—1.
8. DB., p. 266
9. MN., LXXII
10. MN., XXIII. see DB., p. 141.
11. SN., XXII. 65. see DB., pp. 142-3.
12. Therīgāthā, XVIII. 86 ; see The Concept of Liberation in Indian Philosophy, p. 62,
13. IP., Vol. I. p. 449.
14. Rhys Davids : Buddhism, pp. 111-2.
15. Keith : Buddhist Philosophy, p. 61.
16. Dhammapada, verse 114.
17. Viśuddhimagga, referred to by Lad, The Concept of Liberation in Indian Philosophy, p. 65.
18. AN., IX. 34. See Dhammapada, Appamāda-Vagga, 1-3.
19. nibbāṇaṁ paramaṁ sukhaṁ—Dhammapada, 203.
20. MN., I, LXXV.
21. Udāna, VIII, 10.
22. Sarva-Siddhānta-Sāra-Saṁgraha, II.4.21. See IP., Vol. I, p. 448.

23. MN., I, See Early Monatic Buddhism P. 280
24. Dasgupta : A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 109.
25. MN., LXXII.
26. MN., I,
27. MN., XXII, Vol. I, p. 185.
28. yattha āpo ca paṭhavī, tejo vāyo na gādhati.···na tattha candimā bhāti tamo tattha na vijjati—Udāna, I.
29. atthaṁgatassa na pamāṇaṁ atthi yena naṁ vajjuṁ taṁ tassa natthi—Sutta-Nipāta, V. 7. 101.
30. SN., XLIV.
31. See DB., p. 38.
32. CPB., p. 272.
33. The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux, pp. 266-7.
34. Ibid pp. 265-6 ; The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa, p. 49.
35. advaya-lakṣaṇaṁ vijñapti-mātram—Triṁślkā ; The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa, pp. 52-55.
36. Early Monastic Buddhism, pp. 292-3.

10 (a) THE UNIVERSAL SELF—NIRVĀṆA—THE ABSOLUTE

1. atthi. ajātaṁ abhūtaiṁ akataṁ asaṁkhataṁ——Udāna, VIII. 3.
2. Udāna, VIII. 1.
3. See Problem of Īsvara in the Sāṁkhya Philosophy of the present author, Journal of the University of Gauhati, XXVI-XXVII.
4. IP., Vol. I, P. 387.
5. Quoted in Ānandācārya's Brahmadarśana, p. 10 ; see IP., Vol. I, p. 466.
6. DB., p. 371.

10 (b) THE CONCEPT OF THE ABSOLUTE IN THE LATER BUDDHISTIC SYSTEMS

1. dve satye···loka-samvṛti-satyaṁ ca, satyaṁ ca paramārthataḥ—MK., XXIV. 8. See Mādhyamika Philosophy, p. 38.
2. Chandrakīrti's comt. on MK., XXIV. 7.
3. tasmānnabhāvo nābhāvo nirvāṇam iti yujyate—MK., XXV. 10. See also ibid, XXV. 11-16.
4. anirodham anutpādam anucchedam aśāśvatam. anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirgamam—MK., I. 1.
5. apara-pratyayaṁ śāntaṁ prapañcair aprapañcitam. nirvikalpam anānārtham etat tattvasya lakṣaṇam—MK., XVIII. 9. See Mādhyamika Philosophy, p. 41.
6. no saṁsārasya nirvāṇād kiñcid asti viśeṣaṇam. na nirvāṇasya saṁsārād kiñcid asti viśeṣaṇam—MK., XXV. 17.
7. SBT., pp. 210, 211, 245 ; Triṁśikā and Bhāṣya, 17-18.
8. See Sitamsusekar Bagchi's 'Introduction' to Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra.
9. Viṁśatikā, 1 ; Triṁśikā, 16-18 and Bhāṣya on them.
10. SBT., pp. 229-230.
11. tathāgatagarbha-śabda-śabdite ālaya-vijñāne—Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra, VI, pp. 90-1.
12. SBT., pp. 23-24.
13. Ibid, pp. 25-26
14. Ibid, p. 1.
15. Ibid, pp. 253-5.
16. Ibid, pp. 257-8.
17. Ibid, p. 270.
18. Ibid, pp. 270-272.
19. Ibid, pp. 287-295.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. K. P. Sinha passed M. A. in Sanskrit from the Jadavpur University in 1963. He obtained the Ph. D. degree from the same university in 1968 and the D.Litt. degree from the Burdwan University in 1982. Dr.Sinha is a devoted researcher in different fields of Indian Philosophy. Besides, he is the first exponent of the Bishnupriya Manipuri Linguistics.

Dr. Sinha's other works are :

1. Nyāya-darśana-vimarśaḥ
2. Śāṅkara-darśane Jñāna-mīmāṅsā.
3. Śāṅkara-darśane Tattva-mīmāṅsā
4. Reflexions on Indian Philosophy (in the press).
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